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TWICE-A-MONTH

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# The Popular Magazine

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OCT-JUNE 1914

WESTERN  
SERIAL  
BY  
B.M. BOWER



PAINTED BY  
STANLEY L. WOOD

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Inside front cover





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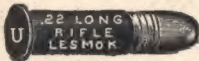
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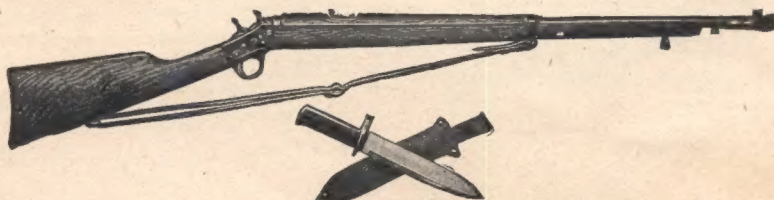
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VOLUME XXXII

NUMBER 6

TWICE-A-MONTH

## The Popular Magazine

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of Rice Leaders of the  
World Association



# THE POPULAR MAGAZINE

VOL. XXXII.

JULY 1, 1914.

No. 6.

## The Son

By W. B. M. Ferguson

*Author of "The Wrong House," "Garrison's Finish," Etc.*

Once in every few years a big unusual novel comes to the surface. We believe this is such a novel. A mystery story if you will, with the secret held in a square box wrapped in manila and sealed with wax, and not to be opened till the addressee reaches his twenty-first birthday; but it is more than mystery. A love story, and you have two types of woman for your choice of heroine; but it is more than love. A story of greed and hypocrisy, of honesty and self-sacrifice; of big money and oppression, of business craft and a fine example of detective skill that will stir your imagination—these are some of the things that go to make this the best story Ferguson has given us since "Garrison's Finish."

(A Book-Length Novel.)

### CHAPTER I.

#### INTRODUCING TWO SIDES OF THE ETERNAL TRIANGLE.

**A**RNOLD HASTINGS, a roll of blue prints under his arm, hurried into the general office from the drafting room. It was late, the elevator had stopped running, and janitor and charwomen had appeared in the halls.

Hastings had thought himself the sole remaining representative of the Empire Construction Company until, entering the general office, he saw Miss Willoughby at the filing cabinet still busy with the day's correspondence. She was a quiet girl with a gift for minding her own business and getting through

an enormous amount of routine without apparent effort. John Marsland, the company's president, and a human dynamo himself, had the knack of getting the most work out of the machine, and he had not neglected this important cog; important because Nan Willoughby as stenographer and confidential secretary earned double her salary. For being only a woman she was privileged to do a man's work without receiving a man's pay.

To the perfunctory and superficial observer there was nothing remotely striking about little Miss Willoughby; Hastings, with another face constantly in his thoughts, would have said, if asked, that he did not think her even pretty. As a matter of fact, however,



he had never considered the matter, never thought of the girl as other than a cog in the office machinery. She had been there when, fresh from college six months or so previously, he had entered the employment of the Empire Company, and, no doubt, she would still be there, fading and paling with the passing years and deadly routine, when he was head of the firm and foremost architect in the country. For Arnold Hastings was but twenty-one and that age seldom errs on the side of modesty. Indeed his prospects warranted his ambitious daydreams and sublime self-confidence.

Other than the stereotyped "good morning" and "good night," Hastings hardly remembered exchanging a dozen words with Miss Willoughby, and now it came as rather a surprise to find himself observing her with an almost personal interest; as a human being and fellow worker. He noticed that, standing under the green-shaded swinging arc light, she looked very white and tired, and it occurred to him for the first time that she had extremely pretty hair; that her figure was quite worthy that much abused word *svelte*, and that the hand holding the open drawer of the filing cabinet looked curiously small and white. And for the first time also he found himself wondering what this girl's other life might be; her real life, not that of cog in the business machine.

No doubt this new perception was due entirely to his own mental condition, his levitation of spirits and rousing satisfaction with life in general. All was well with the world; he was no longer merely a young man in love, but one who knew that love was returned. The suspense was over, and he wanted every one, high and low, to share his new-found happiness. He was in the mood to talk with the merest stranger and give his overcoat to the first importunate beggar. Joy had made him

kin with the world, and he had sympathy and understanding for all.

Therefore instead of seizing hat and coat, and mumbling the usual perfunctory and absent-minded "Good night," he quite startled little Miss Willoughby by remarking suddenly: "You look awfully tired. Why don't you take a day off?"

She turned and stared at him in silence a moment as if too surprised to speak. Her eyes, he found himself reflecting, were remarkably nice, and, as she flushed, he thought what a wonderful improvement color lent to some faces. He had never imagined she could look so pretty.

"Oh, I don't need a holiday, thank you," she smiled. "Monday and the first of the month is always a hard day, but I've been no busier than Mr. Marsland, or any one else."

"Mr. Marsland's a tremendous worker—a wonderful man in every way," said Hastings, with an almost proprietary enthusiasm. "And for that reason he's apt to spare others no more than himself. He doesn't mean to be a grinder."

Miss Willoughby greeted this quick defense with an understanding smile, for it was no secret that this young employee was privileged above all others, and held an enviable position with the company. Despite the great disparity in years, the president and he had become very intimate. It was known, also, as such things become known, that Hastings was wealthy in his own right, by no means dependent on his salary. Those who were supposed to know said he was worth half a million at least.

"I've no complaint to make, Mr. Hastings," said the girl.

A drawer in the cabinet stuck and he arose to help her; their hands touched inadvertently, and again the swift flush overspread her face; then she paled as quickly and turned away. Hastings



read this as another sign of nervous exhaustion.

"You really must take a holiday," he urged with the utmost concern. "And you should have an assistant. I'm sure you do the work of two ordinary men. I'll speak to Mr. Marsland about it to-morrow."

"Please don't, Mr. Hastings." She looked distressed. "He'll think I've been complaining. I'm not overworked at all——"

"Yes, you are," interrupted Hastings decidedly, determined everybody should be happy. "Mr. Marsland will be the first to recognize it; he's been too busy to notice, that's all. Somebody should bring such matters to his attention, and I'm the most logical one. You see," he finished in a sudden burst of confidence, "I'm going to marry Mr. Marsland's daughter."

Nan Willoughby turned away sharply, and closed the drawer of the filing cabinet.

"I wish you every happiness, Mr. Hastings," she said at length in a low voice. "I know you will be very, very happy."

"Thank you," he replied, putting on his overcoat and rather wondering what had induced him to speak of his recent engagement. "Good night, Miss Willoughby. Er—are you coming my way?"

"No, thank you, I'll be half an hour yet."

"Well, good night. I'll speak to Mr. Marsland, and you must take a vacation. We can't afford to have you on the sick list." Of late he had begun to speak of the firm as "we."

Miss Willoughby smiled brightly again. "Good night, Mr. Hastings."

But when the door closed she stood for a long moment staring apathetically at nothing in particular, and now even John Marsland would not have failed to notice how white and haggard his secretary looked.

Hastings, in the same buoyant humor, gave half a dollar to the charwoman he passed in the hall, and, on reaching the subway, mechanically accepted the evening paper from his favorite boy, parted with a quarter, and told him to keep the change.

The uptown express was villainously crowded as usual, and, as he wedged his way into the first car, he came face to face with another straphanger, a rugged young man with high cheek bones, yellow hair, and pale-blue eyes. This was Adolph Bergstrom, a fellow employee. He was shrewd, able, ambitious, and Hastings' senior by at least a dozen years, looking more youthful than he was. As with all his employees—Hastings excepted—Marsland got the last ounce of labor out of Adolph Bergstrom, using him both in real-estate deals and in superintending active construction work. For the Empire Company speculated in realty, buying the land on which it subsequently built, and Bergstrom was a born judge of values. Under Marsland's tutelage he was fast acquiring a thorough and comprehensive knowledge of New York realty.

From the first there had been little love lost between Bergstrom and Hastings, though neither had shown the other anything but the utmost courtesy, Bergstrom being by far the better dissembler. Hastings knew he had supplanted the other in Marsland's esteem; that before he had come to know the latter and find employment with the Empire Company, Bergstrom had been the "white-haired boy" and the president's favorite. Indeed he was still the other's right-hand man in a business sense, but the social intimacy that had also existed was diminishing steadily, and this, perhaps, could be attributed more to Dorothy Marsland and her aunt.

Hastings had found Bergstrom a frequent visitor at the Marsland home, and had won out in the ensuing fight



for Dorothy's favor; a fight none the less intense if conducted under cover. Hastings had nothing with which to reproach himself; Bergstrom had been no more an accepted suitor than he himself, and he had considered it a fair field and no favor.

But since the advent of Hastings, whatever favor Adolph Bergstrom had found in Dorothy Marsland's eyes steadily diminished and finally vanished, and he was relegated to the hopeless position of family friend. Therefore Hastings had never any just cause to dislike the other; the dislike was instinctive, and persisted in spite of the sympathy which a successful rival can feel for another. The apparent utter unreasonableness of the antipathy vexed him and he made heroic and spasmodic efforts to conquer it, for Hastings' whole nature was against pettiness and prejudice in any form or anything approaching underhand dealing.

Now, therefore, had he consulted his own pleasure, Hastings would, on finding himself face to face with Bergstrom, have promptly sought another car; instead, he stood his ground, doggedly determined to make another effort at finding some responsive qualities in this pale-eyed young man.

Bergstrom smiled his usual polite greeting, made room for Hastings beside him, and they fell into a desultory conversation, chiefly "shop" talk, for Bergstrom thought in dollars and cents, and it was difficult for one to discover what other interest he had in life.

And as they talked, Hastings kept searching anew and in vain for logical reasons for disliking the man; there existed no reasons but purely physical and irrelevant ones. He decided he did not like Bergstrom's eyes; they were small, close together, and seldom looked one fair in the face. Nor did he like a pale, flat dimple that came and went on the end of the Bergstrom nose. Nor the blunt-fingered, some-

what reddish hands that were never still, but writhed about with maddening activity. Childish reasons these, and yet Hastings found it impossible to conquer them.

"I've heard of your engagement, Mr. Hastings," Bergstrom was saying, his eyes on the other's chin. "I hope I'm not the last to offer congratulations. Charming girl, Miss Marsland. She deserves the best fellow in the world."

Hastings knew that Bergstrom had no intention of implying that he was the best fellow in the world; rather, perhaps, the opposite. What Dorothy Marsland deserved and what she got were two different propositions.

Bergstrom pointed to the paper he held—when the conversation promised to die a natural death. "Have you seen this about them finding a lot of bones in the cellar of a Chicago house?"

Hastings nodded. He had seen the sensational account; but, as a newly engaged young man, his thoughts weren't running precisely on skeletons, and he lacked a taste for the gruesome.

Bergstrom, however, appeared to find an unwholesome pleasure in the article. "Promises to be another mystery like the Doctor Crippen case," he remarked with evident satisfaction. "It says the bones are very old." His eyes shifted to Hastings' nose. "You know Chicago is my home town. I lived there for twenty years."

"Indeed," said Hastings, with an aroused interest. "I was born in Chicago myself, and lived there until I was about six years of age."

Bergstrom raised his flaxen brows. "You don't say? Let me see. Hastings. Hastings— Is your father in the packing business? Brown, Hart & Hastings?"

"No, my parents are dead. My father, I believe, was connected with the Second National Bank, of Chicago."

The flaxen brows went up again, this time higher. "You don't say? This is



certainly a coincidence. Why, almost the first job I got was runner for the Second National. But I don't remember any one by the name of Hastings."

"Probably it was before your time. My father died fifteen years ago."

"Fifteen years? You don't say? Why, I was with the Second National then! Funny I don't remember your father; can't place him at all. I can name pretty nearly every member of the staff from the president down. What position did your father hold?"

"I don't know," said Hastings shortly, resenting the cross-examination, and half regretting he had been so personal. "I believe he was first cashier."

Bergstrom shook his head. "Oh, no," he said placidly. "I remember the first cashier very well; his name was Robert Forbes. He'd been with them for years, and left some time after I came. The man promoted to his job was called Cummings, and he's first cashier yet. There were no assistants by the name of Hastings. I remember them all perfectly."

"I can hardly agree with you. Your memory can't be so good as you seem to think, for my father was first cashier at the period mentioned."

"Oh, no," said Bergstrom, placid and unruffled. "It simply can't be. You're mistaken, Mr. Hastings. Are you sure it was the Second National?"

"Yes, the Second National!" retorted Hastings, raising his voice and angered by the other's calm persistency. "I'm making no mistake at all! I think I should know what position my father occupied, for if I've no personal recollection of it, I'm sure I heard it often enough. He was first cashier of the Chicago Second National, and that was fifteen years ago."

Bergstrom smiled, shrugged, and deftly changed the subject, the flat, white dimple seated on the end of his nose. Hastings had come to recognize it as a symbol of aroused emotion, and

it had appeared when its owner was speaking of Dorothy Marsland and offering congratulations.

Hastings was irritated at being goaded into showing a display of temper over so trivial a matter, while Bergstrom, as usual, had remained serene and unruffled.

"By the way, Mr. Hastings," said Bergstrom at length, "if you've nothing better to do to-night, I'd like to have a word or two with you in private."

Hastings looked up from his paper. "I'm sorry. I'm dining with the Marslands."

The flat, white dimple reappeared as Bergstrom smiled. "All right; another time will do."

"What is it? Can't you speak to me now?"

Bergstrom shook his head; he looked as if arriving at a sudden decision. "No, I haven't time. Here's my station. Good night, Mr. Hastings; hope you'll have a pleasant evening. Remember me to them all."

He nodded and smiled—his wintry, mechanical smile—as he left the car.

## CHAPTER II.

### THE LADDER OF SUCCESS.

Hastings lived in an apartment house off Broadway, and in the upper forties. The building was old and belonged to the Vanderslice estate, an ancient and one-time flourishing Knickerbocker family now run to seed chiefly through the profligacies of its sole remaining representative.

Hastings had occupied the same first-floor apartment ever since, as a lad of six, coming from Chicago with his mother. In it his mother had died, and from it she had been buried. Putting up with many inconveniences, Hastings kept renewing the lease from year to year, hating to give up the place for the sake of the associations it had for him. The character of the neighborhood was



still of the best, but the passing years had brought many changes in the shape of modern dwellings, in contrast to which, the "Gotham," as Hastings' apartment house was called, appeared all the more obsolete and out of place.

In the way of repairs it was difficult to get anything out of the agents, Messrs. Partridge & Stone, who invariably promised much and performed little. It was not their fault, however, for they could do nothing without permission of Harold Vanderslice, and this gentleman apparently considered anything but the most pressing repairs a sheer waste of good money.

Hastings had come to the end of his patience, was tired of putting up with insufficient heat and bad hall service, not to mention the incivilities of the underpaid and cross-grained janitor, and had at last decided definitely to seek new quarters when his lease expired at the end of the month.

His mother, on her death five years before, had left him fifty thousand in government four per cents; half of this he had invested in the Sterling Mines Company, an investment which paid ten per cent and promised ten more. He rather prided himself on this financial coup; of course, women knew nothing of business, and where for years his mother had been content with her two thousand a year he had more than doubled the income at one stroke.

As Hastings reached the Gotham, quick, pursuing steps overtook him, and a friendly hand grasped his arm. He turned and, recognizing the other, smiled a genuine welcome. "Oh, hello, Mr. Graves. I didn't know you were behind me. Why didn't you sing out?"

"Afraid of disturbing your meditations," replied Mr. Graves, with a peculiar, pronounced lisp. "I never disturb a man when he's thinking; intelligent thought and meditation are all too rare these days."

Hastings laughed as they entered the

house. "I'm afraid my thoughts were neither intelligent nor profound. I'm not gifted like you in that direction."

"The sum of earthly intelligence doesn't lie in games," replied the other with a smile. "How about to-night? I think I can show you that bishop to king's second is the only winning counter-attack against the Muzio gambit."

Hastings explained that he had a dinner engagement, and the other passed into his own apartment.

Mr. Graves was debonair and dapper; a man of the average height who wore nose glasses, dressed carefully in the latest fashion, and with the utmost good taste; a man with an affected lisp, drawling voice, and tired blue eyes. Sometimes he looked young as the morning, sometimes old as the longest midwinter night. When a fortnight previously, the tenant opposite Hastings had moved out, presumably in a fit of anger against the procrastinations of Messrs. Partridge & Stone, Mr. Graves had taken over the unexpired lease. Thus becoming Hastings' opposite neighbor, it was natural they should come to know each other, and, from a casual morning or evening greeting, became gradually better acquainted. The shortcomings of the Gotham, its agents and owner, proved a never-failing topic of conversation which led to others.

All the advances, however, in the ripening acquaintance had been conducted by Mr. Graves, for Hastings was not one who made friends easily, and he had been rather unfavorably impressed by the other's affected lisp, and almost foppishness of dress. It was impossible, however, to hold out against Mr. Graves' friendliness, and Hastings soon revised completely his first superficial estimation of his neighbor's character.

The first thing that struck him on more careful inspection was the almost disfiguring width between Mr. Graves'



tired blue eyes; also that at times when interested, the affected lisp disappeared and that, apparently, the blue eyes were in no need of the nose glasses and could, on occasion, look far from sleepy. Then he became aware that Mr. Graves was possessed of a very keen and profound intelligence and a surprising fund of odd scraps of information gained presumably for the most part by personal experience.

The man began to interest him in an altogether different way, and when it developed that this next-door neighbor played chess, the budding friendship suddenly flowered.

Hastings had played, and not without honor, on his college team, and rather prided himself on his game, but the first session with Mr. Graves convinced him that not only had he still much to learn about the game, but much he could never hope to acquire. Almost nightly for a week now he had been striving to take the other's measure over the board and had failed signally; sometimes the battle was fought in Hastings' rooms, sometimes in those of Mr. Graves, for the friendship had progressed thus far.

In what manner, if any, Mr. Graves earned his daily bread, Hastings had no idea, for confidences of such a nature had been neither given nor received. He knew merely that his neighbor went out every day, but that sometimes his comings and goings were highly irregular. He often saw him about town, at the Horse Show, the Metropolitan, and first nights; in fact, it seemed as if no important function could be considered a success without the presence of Mr. Graves.

Just before leaving for the Marslands, Hastings entered the library, opened a drawer of the desk, and produced a small, square package wrapped in manila. He had brought it the previous day from his bank in whose deposit vaults it had lain for the past five

years, and, since coming into his personal possession, he had often taken it from the desk, and examined its exterior minutely, a prey to memory and emotion. Now, after eying it a long moment, he returned it to the desk, and locked the drawer.

Shortly afterward he was speeding uptown in a taxi, the future stretching out before him in one long golden vista like the lights of Broadway. Surely, he thought, no young man was so fortunately placed as he; the affianced of such a girl as Dorothy Marsland, and the prospective son-in-law of such a man as her father. He experienced renewed sympathy for Adolph Bergstrom, Nan Willoughby, and all the other less fortunate members of the struggling human family, and, being young, wondered what he had ever done to deserve such supreme happiness and good fortune. He stood high on the ladder of success.

### CHAPTER III.

#### WHAT HAPPENED AT THE MARSLANDS.

The little, informal dinner party at the Marslands in honor of Dorothy's engagement was a distinct success, as indeed it could not fail to be, when every one was in complete accord, and her father did the honors. For if there was one thing that rising capitalist did better than another, it was the "honors."

John Marsland was large, complacent, and imposing with a simple, direct manner, and an honest blue eye. There was something in his look reminiscent of the fidelity and honesty of a hound dog, and when John Marsland said such a thing was this or so, and backed it up with a look from his honest blue eye, none but a Pharisee would have thought of questioning his word. Indeed, during his comparatively short and successful New York business career, Marsland had gained a reputation-



for honesty and fair dealing, and even among those business rivals who, justly or otherwise, accused the Empire company of unethical methods, the accusation was always leveled at Solomon Muller, the virtual owner. And there were even those who thought it a pity that a man like Marsland should have become associated with Muller, a Prussian Jew, who had graduated from the clothing stores of Hester Street.

Marsland had traveled over the greater part of Europe, and was a man with ideas. His was the idea to build and operate a chain of up-to-the-minute hotels strictly for the modern woman and her needs, a plan which was proving a pronounced success.

Hastings' regard for Marsland amounted to veneration, and he thought that, lacking a father, how singularly fortunate he would be in securing such a high-calibered man for a father-in-law. It was all a piece of his universal good fortune, for had Dorothy's father been a pauper or scoundrel he would have loved and married the daughter just the same. But then Dorothy could not be the girl she was unless her father was the man he was; that was the simple and beautiful logic of eugenics.

Hastings believed in breed and heredity. He had a passionate regard for his own name and family, for the father he had known for so brief a time yet remembered as the dearest, most intimate companion of his childhood. And from his mother he had learned what a great and noble man that father had been. In fact, Arnold Hastings had been reared in the principle that he must strive to be just such another man as his father.

The last of the family friends had gone, and Dorothy, her father, Hastings, and Mrs. Protheroe had returned to the big dining room, the men to finish their cigars and partake of a "night-cap," an article which Marsland could manufacture with admirable skill and

versatility. He was also master of the chafing dish.

Dorothy was a remarkably pretty girl of twenty with superb curves and glorious flesh tints. She owned her father's honest blue eyes, and a full, crimson, pouting mouth handed down by her dead mother.

Mrs. Protheroe was Dorothy's aunt; she was an unwieldy, amiable body with an admirable digestion—generally overtaxed—and an arch manner persistently triumphant despite her years. Hastings was a great favorite with her, and she often said if she were twenty years younger Dorothy would have found a dangerous rival. She had the Protheroe vivacity of manner, together with the full, pouting mouth, and in her immediate vicinity there was generally a subtle, haunting aroma vaguely reminiscent of amontillado and stilton, a combination of which she was inordinately fond.

Indeed, to the impartial observer there was something about the Marslands which might possibly have hinted at a certain grossness and materialism, this suggestion even including Dorothy herself. Beautiful as the proverbial picture, slender and sylphlike though she was, she had the frame of her immediate relatives, and the impartial observer might have been pardoned in premising that in due course she would loom up inevitably into the two-hundred-pound class occupied with such distinction by her father and aunt.

Hastings, however, like every young man in love, was far from being an impartial observer; one cannot have superb curves and glorious flesh tints without good health, and good health means a good appetite and digestion. Dorothy had simply the normal relish for food owned by every healthy, red-blooded young animal; he had never noticed that she could absorb twice as much foodstuffs as himself, nor that, in general, her tastes were not his.



Dorothy was talking, her ripe lips and flashing teeth busy with a huge purple grape. "Oh, you must tell us all about it!" she was exclaiming importunately to her fiancé. She pouted charmingly. "I don't see why you never told me before."

"Well——" Hastings paused. Strange he had never thought of mentioning it to Dorothy!

"My dear," said Marsland indulgently, addressing his daughter, "a man who's been engaged only forty-eight hours or so can't tell his fiancée everything."

"I wish you two wouldn't interrupt so!" pouted Mrs. Protheroe, pouring a second glass of sherry. "I'm very much interested. Arnold, dear, what is it you were saying?"

Hastings roused himself. "I was saying that just before my mother died she left something for me, care of the bank, which I wasn't to open until I came of age. I was explaining to Dorothy that as to-morrow is my twenty-first birthday I brought this package from the bank——"

"You'll be twenty-one in an hour," interrupted his fiancée, glancing at the ornolu clock. "Why didn't you bring it with you and open it here? I'm just dying to know what's in it! Are you sure you didn't take just one peep inside? Now, own up."

Hastings shook his head. "Don't you understand I promised my mother not to? I wouldn't open it a fraction of a second before I was twenty-one."

"Quite right, my boy," said Marsland approvingly. "A promise to the dead is, if possible, more binding than one to the living."

"Of course, Arnold, dear," chimed in Mrs. Protheroe. "You are quite right. You promised your dear mother, and you mustn't open it a second sooner."

Dorothy laughed, and shrugged her plump shoulders. "You men have such

a funny idea of honor. I don't see what an hour's difference could possibly make. I must say, Arnold, I admire your total lack of inquisitiveness; I don't see how you could keep from opening it for five long years. Ugh! the bare idea of such a temptation makes me shudder; I know I'd have opened it the first chance I got."

Mrs. Protheroe beamed on Hastings as she reached for another wedge of cheese. "Arnold, my dear, I think you can guess what's in it, can't you? What does a young man come into when he's twenty-one but his inheritance? Lucky boy," wagging a puffy, arch finger at him, "you just see if that package doesn't contain a nice bundle of stock certificates, which, unknown to you, your dear mother has treasured up for your coming of age. I shouldn't be at all surprised if it proved to be a comfortable little fortune. You know, as the country folk say: 'Them that has, gits.'"

"Exactly," said Marsland. "'Them that has, gits.' You're a very lucky fellow, Arnold, but then you're the sort that can be trusted with money. You know what to do with it."

The Marslands had no idea of the extent of Hastings' fortune. The latter was careless about money matters, extravagant in ways, and lived far beyond his income, levying on the remaining principal left of his inheritance after investing in Sterling Mines Company. It is surprisingly easy to acquire a reputation for wealth, and Hastings had done so unconsciously. Marsland merely knew the boy had inherited a fortune from his mother, and when Hastings cheerfully, and without a moment's hesitation, paid out twenty-five thousand cash for investment in the Sterling Mines Company it looked naturally as if, to him, it was but a drop in the bucket. At all events, whether from natural reticence, the wrong kind of pride, or sheer thoughtlessness—per-



haps a combination of all three—Hastings never told Marsland that the money invested on his advice comprised half his total inheritance.

Now for the first time Hastings realized fully this totally erroneous conception of his financial standing held by the Marslands, and hastened to rectify it, not having the slightest suspicion it was of any consequence.

"No," he said, turning to Mrs. Protheroe, "it won't be anything like that. You see, on my mother's death, I came into all there was to inherit—about fifty thousand."

There followed a sudden silence which Hastings quite failed to interpret. He had taken rather much to drink, and was incapable of acute observation. Dorothy was staring at him, a purple grape halfway to her crimson mouth; Mrs. Protheroe had choked on a piece of stilton, and Marsland was examining attentively the ash of his excellent cigar.

"Fifty thousand!" at length burst out Mrs. Protheroe, freeing herself from the cheese. "Oh, I see. But I had always thought, Arnold, dear," beaming anew, "you inherited your entire fortune from your dear mother."

"I did," said Hastings quite cheerfully and innocently. "I haven't any other fortune—until the Sterling Mines Company cuts a melon," turning with a wholly ingenuous smile to Marsland. "I hope," he added, in the same jocular manner, quite unconscious of the look dawning in the amiable Mrs. Protheroe's eyes, Dorothy's set lips, and Marsland's sudden abstraction, "no one has been taking me for a millionaire, for I'm sure I never meant to give that impression."

Another interesting silence followed which, again, Hastings quite failed to interpret. And at this point the maid entered and announced that, if it was quite convenient, Mr. Bergstrom would like to see Mr. Marsland for a moment.

However of late Mr. Bergstrom's society had been at a discount with Dorothy and her amiable aunt, they now seemed to welcome this interruption. Even Mr. Marsland looked relieved.

Mrs. Protheroe took command of the situation, conducting it with admirable finesse. "John," she said peremptorily, addressing her brother-in-law, "Mr. Bergstrom wouldn't call at this hour unless on a matter of urgent business. Show him in here. You men will want to talk business, and we'll leave you in undisputed possession of the field. Come, Dorothy, my dear."

Hastings protested; Marsland, too, protested, evidently undesirous of being left alone with Hastings. It was all in vain, however. Smiling and laughing, Mrs. Protheroe made her escape with Dorothy before either man knew quite what had happened. Hastings was nonplused and resentful. Why should Mrs. Protheroe choose to think he would rather be present at a business discussion—he who had nothing to do with the Empire Company's finances—than spending his usual hour alone with Dorothy?

"I apologize for the lateness of this visit, Mr. Marsland," said Bergstrom, entering the room, "but I understood you would be up late, and so ventured to call on a matter of considerable importance."

Hastings, considering himself de trop, was about to leave the room when Bergstrom interposed. He looked pale and very determined, and the flat dimple had appeared on the end of his nose.

"Don't go, Mr. Hastings," he said. "My business concerns you. This visit of mine isn't an accident, and what I have to say is better said in the presence of both Mr. Marsland and yourself."

Marsland looked his astonishment, while Hastings could do nothing but stare.



"Mr. Marsland," continued Bergstrom, "I hope you won't think I've exceeded the privilege of a friend, but as a friend of the family I consider it nothing but my duty to put you in possession of certain information concerning Mr. Hastings, seeing he has refused to do so himself. I think you have the right to know that he's living under an assumed name; that his right name is Forbes, and that his father was a notorious thief!"

"Mr.—Mr. Bergstrom!" exclaimed Marsland sharply, while Hastings opened his mouth, but could find nothing to say.

"I can prove every word I say," added Bergstrom calmly, his blue eyes cold and malicious. He aimed a long, blunt finger at his rival. "Your father was Robert Forbes, cashier of the Chicago Second National. Fifteen years ago he defaulted with seventy-five thousand dollars, fled to Europe, and probably died there, for he was never caught. You know all this far better than I. You know your father was a notorious thief, and you changed your name for good and sufficient reasons of your own."

Marsland, greatly distressed and agitated, turned his honest blue eyes from Bergstrom to Hastings, and back again, apparently at loss what to say or how to act.

Hastings glowered at his accuser. "Either you're drunk or crazy!" he exclaimed, with an attempt at composure. "Perhaps both. It's the most blackguardly drivel I ever heard. It's so foolish I needn't attempt to answer it or prove your statements the idiotic lies they are."

Bergstrom smiled coldly. "Don't lose your temper, Mr. Forbes, though I suppose it's only natural you should feel your position. I beg to remind you, however, it's of your own making. If you'd been capable of taking the honorable, upright course with Mr. Mars-

land and hadn't assumed a name to which you've absolutely no right, if you'd admitted that your father was the notorious thief——"

Hastings approached the other, so wrought up that he felt he must either cry or fight. And the wine he had taken at dinner inflamed him further, helped to nullify his efforts at self-control, to make him forget his respect for the conventions and the decencies of society.

"Don't say that again!" he exclaimed thickly, with trembling lips and voice. "If you've any spite to work off, have the courage and decency to come out against me and not slander the memory of a man whose shoes you weren't fit to clean! If you say my father was a thief I'll cram the lie down your throat! His record speaks for itself——"

"It does," said Bergstrom, "and so these parlor heroics, Mr. Forbes, are entirely out of place. You can't frighten me nor hide the truth any longer. I'm making no snapshot statements; your birth record's in the bureau of vital statistics, and I knew your father personally. I can easily prove you the son of Robert Forbes. And his theft is so well known that you've only to look up the back files of any paper. There's no getting round the fact of your father being a thief——"

Hastings' fist lashed out suddenly, and, blotting the smile from the other's eyes, sent him crashing over the table, scattering dishes right and left with terrifying din.

Of what happened subsequently Hastings had no very clear idea; the last shred of self-control had vanished, the wine was singing in his head, he was fighting mad, and neither saw or heard. His one idea was to get hold of Adolph Bergstrom and kill him; all his latent dislike for the other, long smoldering, had broken out in this violent eruption.



He had a hazy recollection of Marsland suddenly taking hold of the situation which, through evident astonishment, he had permitted Bergstrom to engineer as he pleased; of his looking very white and angry, saying the scene was disgraceful, and many other things which could not be construed as compliments.

He remembered being almost urged physically by Marsland into the hall, where he struggled with hat and coat; of seeing the weighty Mrs. Protheroe on the stairs, her wonted smile changed to a frozen expression of contempt and severe displeasure; of his attempting to apologize and explain what had happened, to convey some idea of the kind of man his father had been and what his memory meant to him.

Then he found himself on the sidewalk, almost in tears, the cool night wind feeling grateful to his throbbing temples.

#### CHAPTER IV.

##### HIS HERITAGE.

Hastings walked home that night, the exercise helping him to regain lost mastery of self. The clock was striking midnight when he entered his apartment in the Gotham. He was still concerned wholly with what had happened at the Marslands, and, lighting a pipe, sat down to think over ways and means of placating Dorothy and Mrs. Protheroe. There was no doubt that liquor had been partly responsible for the disgraceful scene, not only on Bergstrom's part, but his own. Marsland's "night-cap" had been very potent, and the bottle had been passing freely during the preceding festivities. Also, Hastings had been celebrating with various friends before ever reaching the Marslands. For the first time it occurred to him that his native regard for Scotch whisky had been developing of late, with a corresponding increase in consump-

tion. He must stop it; now, on his twenty-first birthday, he could make no better resolution. For it was midnight, and he was twenty-one.

This fact recalled the package he had brought from the bank, and, opening the desk, he took it out. There was something sacred about this plain paper parcel, a square box wrapped in manila and sealed with wax; a sacredness which Dorothy had quite failed to sense. He could not have opened it even before her; it was his mother's last gift, the last thing she could ever give "her boy"; a message as it were from the grave. She had written his name on the box, and at sight of the well-remembered, delicate hand a rush of bittersweet memories engulfed him; these rooms in which she had lived and died seemed redolent of her gentle presence, and he saw again the kindly, careworn face with its brave smile.

Hastings sighed and refilled his pipe, then went mechanically to the cellaret, suddenly remembered his new-formed resolution, and put back the bottle. Scotch high balls and a pipe had, by habit, become the sharers of his joys and sorrows.

He returned to the desk and opened the box; it contained some newspaper clippings, half a dozen letters, and nothing more. The topmost letter was in his mother's writing, and that of the others he recognized instantly as his father's, for specimens of the latter's penmanship were extant; in fact, at one time Hastings had tried vainly to acquire that simple, legible, clerkly hand. Not without some vague premonition of what was about to be unfolded, Hastings opened and read his mother's letter.

MY OWN DEAR BOY: When you read this you will have reached man's estate, and I shall be no longer with you, for I have known for some time that my ailment is incurable, and at the best, only a matter of months, not years. There is no cure for cancer of the stomach. Forgive me if I have

kept it from you until almost the last; the knowledge would only have caused needless worry and trouble. Time enough to learn the inevitable when we must. However, I did not mean to speak of myself, but of you.

Arnold, you are now a man; you have had your education, and are out in the world prepared to fight a man's battles, ready to give as well as receive blows—for life is a fight. The time has come when you must take your proper name, even though that name may mean disgrace.

Your name is Forbes, not Hastings. When you were six years old your father defaulted with seventy-five thousand dollars from the Chicago Second National Bank of which, as you know, he was cashier—

Hastings—or, to give him his proper name, Arnold Forbes—dropped the letter, his face suddenly old and gray. So Bergstrom had not been drunk! Rather, he had been true to his character, sure of every fact before making a move. That conversation in the subway took on a sinister significance. Bergstrom had mentioned the gruesome discovery in the Chicago cellar merely as a means of bringing the conversation round to that city; he had known then the other's true name and all about his past. He had been baiting him for his own amusement, gloating over the mine he would spring eventually. Forbes also recalled Bergstrom's request for a private interview. No doubt, the other had intended originally to charge him with the facts; but, learning of the Marslands' party, malice had suggested a more appropriate method.

Forbes pulled himself together, and with white, set face resumed reading his mother's letter.

I need not go into details about the theft. The newspaper clippings you will find with this letter go into the matter in a far abler and fuller manner than I can. It was a nine days' sensation, and they made the most of it, of course, caring nothing about those who were left to suffer—you and I. Even in after years the matter was referred to in the press from time to time. You will see that your father was traced to New York, and from there to Europe. I never saw him again from the morning when he left for

the bank at his usual hour, nor had I the faintest suspicion of what was about to happen.

The other letters you will find with this speak for themselves; they are his, written from the different cities of Europe to which he fled. You will see they kept up for six months, and then—you will know what the last one means. Other than myself you are the first who has knowledge of these letters. Even though they bear no address I was afraid the authorities might trace him through them. Had I known your father's whereabouts, where a letter might reach him, I would have begged him by all he held sacred to give himself up; this, however, I was unable to do, and I could not think of betraying him.

Shortly after your father's flight, my only relative, an uncle, died leaving me the small fortune which has supported us both and given you your education. This inheritance was very fortunate, for otherwise I would have been compelled—though unfit—to do any work I could find. No doubt I should have used the money in making restitution so far as I was able; that is what honor pointed out, and yet I could not see my way to do it. I was not in good health—your baby sister was born dead the following month—quite incapable of earning my daily bread, and I had your future to consider. All my friends, as is so often the case, had proved fair-weather ones, and I was absolutely alone, at handgrips with deadly fact, not theory.

I moved to New York and took the name of Hastings; you were but six, and don't remember when your name ceased to be Forbes. No doubt you will blame me for having taken this step, and subsequently I regretted it; yet at the time I thought I was acting for the best. No doubt, through ill health and all I had suffered in Chicago from the public, I had an exaggerated idea of our position; at all events I wished to save you what I had come through, and to keep your young life free from embitterment. I thought it time enough to bear a man's troubles when you were a man. We can only be young once.

Then as you grew up I still kept the fact secret, and you believed your father had died while on a business trip abroad. I meant to tell you the truth when you came of age, but will not live to be with you on your twenty-first birthday.

My dear boy, this is a sorrowful heritage, and I don't know if I've taken the right course even now. I have had no one to advise me. I wish I could have kept the truth from you always, but I would rather



you heard it from me than from an outsider. Though fifteen years will have passed when you read this, things like that don't die, and they often rise up to confound us at the worst time possible. Your father's was a sensational case, known the country over, and for that reason I thought the only hope of oblivion lay in an entire change of name. At all events, whether I acted rightly or wrongly, my object was attained, and your youth at least has been free from the handicaps imposed by a dishonored name. You have education, an assured position, and many friends, and those of the latter who are worth keeping will not be affected adversely by this discovery; they will rally round you and help to soften the blow. True friends like Mr. Marsland, your employer, will offer nothing but sympathy and understanding; the other kind are not worth knowing, and the sooner you find it out the better.

I ask you not to judge your father harshly. I have brought you up with love and veneration for his memory. With the exception of this single instance, I found him the most honorable, considerate, and upright of men. No man could have cared more for his family and home, and though we never had any more money than we could use—the Second National isn't noted for liberality toward its employees—our married life was without a cloud until this awful blow fell. The whole affair was so entirely foreign to your father's character as I knew it—his desertion of me at such a time as well as the theft—that I firmly believe he was mentally irresponsible—a fact which his letters bear out. Financial worry, overwork, and perhaps some little mental weakness—all unsuspected by me—must have produced an abnormal state of mind which prompted him to the deed. In no other way can I account for it.

Up to the time of receiving his first letter, I, of course, refused to put the same construction on his absence as that of the bank officials and police. I could not believe him guilty even when I received his full confession. Nor during all these years have I believed the threat of self-destruction conveyed in his last letter. Even though hearing nothing further from him I have hoped against hope that he still lived and would one day return to us.

I have loved and believed in your father until the last—and shall even beyond the grave. I say again he was not guilty; not as a deliberate thief, a man responsible for all his actions. Of late I seem to have heard his voice proclaiming his innocence. Absurd

fancies, one will say, and yet I have also felt that some mystery must lie behind your father's case, and that if he were only here to-night he could explain it all away. I feel, too, that either he was mentally irresponsible or shouldered the crime of another. Such an action would be typical of your father as I knew him. Despite all the evidence and the opinion of the world I can ask nothing higher of Heaven than that you, my son, be such another man as your father. Greater proof of love and faith a wife and mother cannot give.

The letter closed as only a mother's can, a mother who knows that her allotted time on earth is fast drawing to an end, and whose every thought, hope, and wish has been centered on her only son. A lump had risen in young Forbes' throat, and the tears stood in his eyes when, at length, he put aside the letter and brought out those of his father.

There were six in all, the first dated from Cherbourg a week subsequent to the writer's flight. The others, posted at Paris, Berlin, Vienna, Rome, and London, followed one another at intervals of about a month. In the Cherbourg letter Robert Forbes made full confession to his wife, saying he could not explain the sudden impulse to theft except that the constant strain of trying to make both ends meet on his small salary while handling thousands upon thousands of dollars, had proved finally a temptation beyond endurance. He was underpaid and overworked, and another baby was coming to make conditions all the harder. He was sick of the whole hopeless game and had made up his mind that for once in his life he would have enough money to kill worry and care. For once in his life he would enjoy himself, and after that he didn't care how soon the end might come. He finished by quoting Tennyson: "Better fifty years of Europe than a cycle of Cathay." "Better six months of real existence," wrote Robert Forbes, "than a lifetime's penury and drudgery."

It was an eminently selfish, cold-blooded letter, containing not a single thought for the woman he had left alone to bear his disgrace and her own approaching trial; not a word about his son or the unborn babe. It was all self, self.

Young Forbes struck his clenched fist on the desk, his face gray with agony. This was the father, this the parent whose memory he had been taught to revere; the father whom he had loved with all a child's passionate, unquestioning ardor! This was the unsuspected tragedy of his mother's life, the interpretation of that sad, brave smile. This was the man in whom, despite all, she had believed to the last, excusing and condoning to the point of fatuity! She could ask nothing higher of Heaven than that he be such another man as *this*!

The next five letters were much briefer than the first, and though still full of self—Forbes complaining that his head hurt him strangely and that he could not sleep—they showed some concern for his wife's condition and inquiry after his son. The final letter, dated from London, spoke of suicide. In it he wrote:

This is the last you will hear from me or of me, and the best thing you and the children—if the baby lived—can do is forget there ever was such a person as my unworthy self.

I've found there's no such thing as peace and happiness in this world, and that, contrary to my idea, they are not to be bought with money. The past six months have been a hell, far worse than all my years of drudgery at the bank. My action has brought its own punishment, infinitely greater than any society could devise. What does bodily comfort and even luxury signify if the mind is a hell?

I've wandered over half Europe in search of peace and a decent night's sleep, and am convinced at last that, for me at least, they aren't to be found this side of the grave. I've tried everything, from the depths of dissipation to the heights of religion, and all to no purpose. Every moment of the day

and night I expect to feel the hand of the law on my shoulder, and I read "détective" in every face I meet. Of course, for this reason I am a pariah of pariahs, afraid to speak to the veriest stranger, afraid he will speak to me.

I now think I must have been mentally unbalanced when I defaulted, and certainly of late I've had reason to doubt my sanity. I cannot sleep, I cannot eat, I cannot even think. And so it has come time for me to pay the piper with the last thing I have—my life. I have given all else, but he is not satisfied. My money is about done, and I must find sleep, even though it be the eternal one. Of necessity my appearance has changed greatly, I am living here in lodgings under an assumed name, and when the river police find my body in the Thames—probably off Limehouse Reach—none will ever know it to be that of Robert Forbes, the defaulting bank cashier, and, after the due and customary period in the morgue—or mortuary, as they call it here—it will find in an unknown grave the oblivion it deserves. At last I will have found unbroken rest, and, if there be such a thing beyond the grave, peace and forgetfulness—

Here Robert Forbes appeared to break down, for the rest of the letter was full of endearing terms, supplications for forgiveness, and farewells. At the bottom was a large blot, as if the writer's tears had mingled with the ink, that ink which, despite the years, looked as if it had been penned but yesterday.

It was a harrowing letter for even a stranger to read, and it left the boy white and trembling. He could picture vividly his father penning that farewell letter, sitting in the cheap London lodgings, alone with his conscience and the shadow of his impending fate. Then of the cold, bleak walk by the river, and finally— Here his mind revolted.

No doubt existed in young Forbes' mind that, contrary to his mother's belief, the sinister purpose outlined in that last letter had been carried into effect; that his father had committed suicide and lay in an unknown grave among London's outcasts.



A photograph of Robert Forbes stood on the desk, where it had always stood since as far back as Arnold could remember. It was not a handsome face, but strong, earnest, kindly, and sincere. The eyes looked directly at one, and in them Arnold had often found courage and inspiration toward the higher, nobler thing. For him it had been the symbol of many things.

Hot with the memory of his mother's tragedy, he now took the photograph as if to tear it to pieces and stamp it underfoot; instead, after a long look, he buried head on arms, the picture pressed close to his face.

And the dawn found him thus.

## CHAPTER V.

### THE LADDER IS KICKED FROM UNDER.

John Marsland looked worried and distressed, as if he had spent almost as bad a night's rest as Arnold Forbes.

"I'd no idea you had such a dangerous temper!" he exclaimed, walking up and down the office, and speaking in an irritable voice. "You might have killed Bergstrom; as it is I'm afraid you've injured him seriously. You've laid yourself open to a very grave charge. I'm sure if I hadn't ejected you by main force, murder would have been done. The whole affair was disgraceful, utterly disgraceful!"

Forbes had expected sympathy and understanding, not censure.

"I suppose it was disgraceful," he admitted apathetically. "I don't think I'd have lost control of myself if I'd been quite sober. That's the only excuse I can make, though I know it's a poor one."

Marsland raised his brows. "I hope you're not inferring you got in any such condition in my house. At the same time," he continued, "I'm not excusing Bergstrom, either; he should have chosen a more appropriate place

and time. And you should have treated the slander as it deserved."

"What Bergstrom said is true," blurted out Forbes.

"What!" exclaimed Marsland, pausing in his walk. "You mean your father——" The honest blue eyes were horrified, incredulous.

Forbes spoke like an old man. "Yes, it's all true. My father was Robert Forbes, cashier of the Chicago Second National, and he defaulted with seventy-five thousand. But Bergstrom lied when he said I knew all about it and had assumed the name of Hastings; I didn't know anything until last night." He then told of the letters, Marsland listening with an incredulity he could not wholly conceal.

And when Forbes had finished there was no outburst of sympathy and understanding as his mother had prophesied. Marsland sat in silence at his desk, a well-nourished hand shading his honest blue eyes while he played with a fountain pen, scribbling at random on the pad at his elbow. The silence became unbearable, and finally young Forbes broke it.

"I don't know if this will have any bearing on my engagement," he said slowly. "I know it won't with Dorothy—I mean she isn't that kind. And yet, of course, I must offer her the opportunity of breaking it off. You see, I've assumed my right name; from now on my name is Forbes, and it's—it's not one she may care to share. Another thing; I don't know when we can be married, for I must pay that Chicago bank every cent of the seventy-five thousand if it takes a lifetime."

Marsland arose. "I'm very, very sorry for you, my boy," he said, with great solemnity. "I never expected such a turn to affairs. As for it affecting your engagement, that's a matter solely between Dorothy and you. She's her own mistress, and I never interfere in such things. But, as you say, and

rightly, she isn't the kind to be affected by this, for it's something for which you aren't to blame.

"Now if I were you I'd run up and see her to-night and tell her all about it. Keep a stiff upper lip, and don't let this thing down you."

"Does Dorothy know anything about what happened last night? I mean what Mr. Bergstrom said?"

John Marsland shook his head. "No more than that you and he quarreled and that you—er—acted as you did. It was impossible to keep that from her, for the racket raised the roof. Women, especially carefully nurtured young girls like Dorothy, can't forget such things," he added seriously, "and I'm afraid you may find it rather hard to square yourself with her. The other matter—about your father, I mean—won't weigh a particle. Women are funny that way; they stumble and make a fuss over the little things of life and rise like soldiers to the big troubles, the things that really count."

Forbes left the office greatly cheered. Marsland had acted as he knew he would. It was great to have such a friend. Dorothy, too, would show nothing but love and sympathy, and indignantly scorn any suggestion of breaking the engagement. Every cloud, however black, has its silver lining, and this one was no exception; as his mother had predicted, it was showing him already the true friends from the false. It would furnish Dorothy with the opportunity of revealing her true self, all her love and faith, the strength and nobility of character which he knew lay beneath her seeming frivolity.

Therefore, Arnold Forbes' emotions can be better imagined than described when that afternoon, at his home, he found awaiting him the following letter from his fiancée:

DEAR MR. FORBES: After what happened last night I know you will agree with me that our engagement is better at an end. I

cannot condone or overlook such an exhibition as you were guilty of. I am sorry, but really I have no alternative.

Forbes folded the letter, and placed it mechanically in his pocket, eyes staring and mouth agape like one who has suddenly and without warning been struck between the eyes by his best friend. His youthful ignorance of the world, his boyish faith in the goodness of all things was fast disappearing. He had yet, however, much to learn.

He left the house, and went uptown to the Marslands.

Forbes, in twenty-four hours, had acquired a new acuteness of perception and sensitiveness of vision; he noticed that the maid, who opened to his ring, an obsequious individual who had profited immensely by his, Forbes', tips, had now become strangely distant and formal, showing him into the drawing-room with a sort of chaste, mute disapproval.

Nor did Mrs. Protheroe present her usual prompt and beaming presence, running in for a moment to exchange a little arch badinage with her "dear Arnold," and then flying precipitately and obviously on the arrival of her niece. Nor did Dorothy come rushing downstairs with gay impetuosity and a great flutter of silks. The house was dead and silent like a tomb, fit setting for Forbes' own thoughts and emotions.

At length, after a due decorous interval, the door opened, and Dorothy entered, looking more beautiful and winsome than ever. Forbes started up, then halted as he met those honest blue eyes, calm and serene as a summer morning. Hitherto he had never noticed them capable of such shallow brightness. It struck him also that Marsland had been quite right in saying Dorothy was her own mistress; she looked not only perfect mistress of herself, but of the situation, entirely composed and collected.

"I had hoped, Mr. Forbes," she said



composedly, with neither coldness nor warmth, "you wouldn't consider it necessary to come here, for discussing the matter is only a waste of time. I see you have my letter."

He stared at her; this girl who looked him so coolly and deliberately in the eye was she who, twenty-four hours ago, had been voicing all the dear intimacies that only sweethearts can utter and understand. It seemed as if he really never had known her; she appeared immeasurably older, more experienced than himself.

"You—you can't mean you intend breaking the engagement simply because of what happened last night!" he blurted out.

"That is precisely what I do mean," she replied dispassionately. "You are not the man I thought you. I would not trust my happiness, my future to a man who possessed a temper he could not control, such a temper that leads inevitably to violence and even crime. A man who could so far forget himself and the respect due his host and fiancée as you have done is not the sort of man I care to marry."

He had become very calm, very pale, very steady of hand and eye. "You don't know what passed last night between Mr. Bergstrom and myself, and yet you have prejudged me?"

"I don't know what happened, but that has nothing to do with it. It's enough for me to know you almost committed murder, conducted yourself here in my father's house as if you were a rowdy in a barroom. Nothing can condone that! There can be no excuse."

"In other words, you never loved me."

She shrugged her exquisite shoulders. "If you mean I never loved you to the point of blindness and fatuity—no! Unlike most women, I prefer to recognize the truth—no matter how hard it may be—before it's too late. If a man

is brutal before marriage, he'll be worse after."

"I admire your wisdom," said Forbes with concentrated bitterness. "I wish I could say as much for your honesty."

"Sir!" She drew herself up, the shallow blue eyes on fire.

"Yes, your honesty!" he repeated, tabling her letter with shaking hand. "Look at that! Here you address me as 'Mr. Forbes,' not 'Hastings.' Evidently that was a slip you didn't know you'd made. Why not at least be honest with me, say you *do* know what happened last night, know all about my father, and believed what Mr. Bergstrom said without first waiting to hear what I might have to say? Why not tell the truth, and admit your love isn't great enough to admit of marrying the son of a thief!" He flung this out with all the anguish and bitterness of his soul.

Knowledge of the fact that, inadvertently, she had written "Forbes" instead of "Hastings" robbed Dorothy of her composure and the lofty rôle she had elected to play. She could no longer plead ignorance of what had passed the previous night, nor hang the cold-blooded jilting on the excuse advanced. She had been caught in a debasing falsehood, and her full under lip became sullen, her eyes somewhat vixenish.

"You're a nice one to talk to me of honesty!" she exclaimed. "You who assumed a name you'd no right to, and who knew what your father was! You who posed as a millionaire and won my heart under false pretenses! I meant to spare your feelings by saying nothing of all this, but now that you've so maliciously distorted my motive we may as well understand each other. You'll find I'm not such a fool as you seem to think me."

"Yes, I *did* believe everything Mr. Bergstrom said, and my father and aunt

believe it too; so there! Mr. Bergstrom isn't a man who tells untruths, and he proved all he said—proved it up to the hilt. But your father being a thief would have meant nothing to me if you had been the man I thought you. But you deceived me from the first; you never said a word about your father's record and never would if Mr. Bergstrom, a true friend, hadn't done it for you. And you who have only a few beggarly thousands pretended to a fortune, and your marriage with me merely meant a way of profiting through my father. You didn't care about *me*, about offering me a false name, or being in no position to support a wife. And yet you talk of honesty!"

Forbes eyed her in silence as if staggered at his own blindness. This was the girl he had loved, the girl he had endowed with all the virtues and none of the failings of her sex! Upon whom he had lavished the best that was in him; who had been the goal of all his efforts, the mainspring of all his actions. He now read the selfishness and materialism of her little soul as if it stood revealed; he understood as if she had spoken the words that his lack of fortune was the true and only pivot on which the whole case revolved.

"I'm sorry," he said slowly, and now without bitterness, "that there should have been this misunderstanding about my financial position. I'm sure I never meant to appear richer than I was. I never considered the matter very closely, and thought my salary and income would be sufficient. As for the rest, all Mr. Bergstrom said is quite true except that I knew nothing about it. I came here, after an interview with your father, to tell you what, it seems, you know already, and to offer you your release. All this, however, you have saved me."

Some hint of what all this meant to him, of all he was going through, must have reached Dorothy's material little

heart, and this, together with whatever exiguous growth of affection or physical appeal she had experienced for him, caused a tear to gather in her blue eyes. She dabbed at it with a scrap of perfumed lace again and again, as if posing in the limelight of a theater.

"You have spoken to me dreadfully!" she exclaimed. "You have deliberately distorted all my motives. You don't consider at all what I have suffered. You don't seem to understand my side of it."

He looked at her steadily for a moment, a smile of iron in his tired eyes. "On the contrary, Miss Marsland, I understand—perfectly. Good night and good-by."

He bowed with the utmost courtesy and formality; an attitude which supported him until he had gained the outer darkness, darkness no blacker, barren, and dreary than that which was in his own soul.

Marsland was still in the office when Forbes, intent on winding up the whole unpleasant matter, returned in the hope that the other had not left. It was late, and Miss Willoughby passed him on the stairs; she walked hurriedly, and her eyes looked red and swollen as if with crying.

Forbes passed on into the office. He remembered he had not spoken to Marsland about Miss Willoughby's vacation. How much had happened since the previous night when he had thought himself nearing the topmost rung of the ladder of success! Now the ladder seemed to have been kicked from under him.

"Well?" said Marsland, glancing up from his desk. His face, as revealed in the arc of the green-shaded light hanging overhead, looked cold and expressionless.

"Miss Marsland has broken the engagement," said Forbes simply.

Marsland affected astonishment. "Not because of your father!" he ex-



claimed. "I know better than that. That wouldn't weigh with Dorothy a particle. Was it because of your behavior last night?"

"So Miss Marsland said."

The other nodded, pursing his lips and looking very solemn. "I was afraid so. I'm sorry, Forbes, but I rather expected this. I told you women can't overlook such things, and you've only yourself to blame. They look at them differently than we men do. There's nothing I can do; my daughter is her own mistress in such matters, and I wouldn't think of interfering."

"I'm not asking you to interfere," said Forbes quietly. He noticed that now it was "Forbes" and "my daughter," not "Arnold" and "Dorothy." He looked steadily at Marsland.

"Why did you pretend you didn't believe what Bergstrom said? Why did you say your daughter knew nothing about my father?"

Marsland's massive face grew hard and impassive; the mouth became grim and inflexible, and the honest blue eyes lost their geniality, a look almost cruel and relentless creeping into them. It occurred suddenly to Forbes that this man might be capable of going to any extreme in achieving a settled purpose, and that, if crossed, he might prove both ruthless and implacable. A lot of brutality and venom might lurk beneath that benevolent mountain of flesh and jovial, easy-going manner. And, as in Dorothy's case, it also occurred to him that perhaps he never had known John Marsland, near and intimate as they had been. He was now reading the other in the light of recent events, with eyes that had been newly opened—but yet not fully.

"What do you mean?" demanded Marsland, with a look that had felled many a subordinate. But it only served to arouse in Forbes a latent antagonism.

"I mean," he replied, "Miss Marsland was fully acquainted with all that

passed last night; that she and you and Mrs. Protheroe believed all Bergstrom said. Miss Marsland has said so herself."

Marsland closed and locked his desk, took out a cigar, and bit off the end. "Quite right," he said coldly. "Mr. Bergstrom proved everything in his usual methodical way; he came armed with proofs none but a fool would have denied. If I said nothing about it to you it was simply in order to spare your feelings, and for such consideration I think we deserve thanks and appreciation, not censure."

The smile of iron had returned to Forbes' eyes. He was reading the father as accurately as he had read the daughter. "I understand, Mr. Marsland. It was very considerate of you; however, I must let you know why the engagement was broken. Not because I acted as I did, not because of my father's record, but simply because my mother, unfortunately, left me only a 'few beggarly thousands'—the words are Miss Marsland's—and not the half million or so it was confidently thought I possessed."

Marsland grew very red. "You forget yourself, Mr. Forbes! How dare you impute any such base motives to me and mine! Is this how you repay all my kindness and consideration, all my——"

"It's the truth, and you know it's the truth!" interrupted the other bitterly. "It's a matter of dollars and cents, that's all; and to try and put any lofty construction on it is only hypocrisy! I see now where I stand with you, and where I've always stood. So long as I was supposed to have half a million or so and capital to invest, I was eligible; but when it turned out I had only a 'few beggarly thousands——'" He laughed harshly. "It isn't the facts themselves I'm kicking against, but the idea that you still think me fool enough to believe the excuse put forward. I

would have understood if only you'd come out and talked to me like a man. I'm never afraid to hear the truth!"

Marsland's big face was white and quivering, and an active animosity showed in his eyes. In silence he arose and put on hat and coat.

"Mr. Forbes," he said deliberately, turning at the door, "your unfortunate family affairs have become a nuisance and have led you into saying things I cannot overlook. In view of your youth and inexperience I might forgive your attitude as applied to me personally, but I cannot condone the insult to my daughter. If you are not afraid to hear the truth then let us have it by all means! The truth is that you've acted like a cad and a coward! It is you who have wronged us, not we you, for don't imagine I believe for a moment you only learned last night, and in that highly improbable manner, of your father's crime or that the name you bore was none of your choosing. As for assuming a financial standing you never owned, that's a matter which rests entirely with your own conscience and never concerned me or mine remotely. But it offers another unpleasant footnote to your true character.

"I would have spared you all this if you hadn't added insult to injury and tried to shoulder the blame of your own misconduct and deceit on an innocent young girl whom you professed to love.

"In the future, Mr. Forbes, you and I meet solely as employer and employee. I hope you will bear that in mind. Good night, sir."

Forbes remained for some moments staring at the closed door in the same dazed, heavy manner with which he had received Marsland's words.

Forbes walked home that night, the flux of his thoughts demanding physical expression. He did not regret speaking out his mind to Marsland; the latter never had been a true friend,

but a purely mercenary character with a hitherto unsuspected fund of hypocrisy and cunning. Yet there was a coarse streak in John Marsland—in fact, the whole family—of which Forbes, as yet was not wholly conscious.

Forbes had loved Dorothy with the sincerity, passion, and superficial vision of youth's first romance, and now was as hard hit as one in such a position can be. He saw no compensations in the situation, nor could he imagine remotely that the time might come when he might even be thankful for this crushing blow of fate.

He forgot his new resolution that night, and, the Scotch whisky and soda at his elbow, sat far into the night, thinking of the future. For the first time he began to pay serious attention to the financial side of the question, and, rummaging among his litter of private papers, brought out a handful of old check books and bills. Supported by the bottle of Scotch, he made a protracted assault on the long column of figures; the result was not cheering. Of the twenty-five thousand left after investing the other half of his inheritance in the Sterling Mines Company, he had now little more than five thousand, and outstanding bills would take at least two thousand of this. His salary was but twenty-five hundred a year, and he had been living at the rate of seven or eight thousand, drawing heedlessly on his surplus.

The twenty-five thousand invested with the Sterling Mines Company must be withdrawn at once and turned over to the Chicago Second National in part payment of the seventy-five thousand stolen by his father; for the payment of this debt was a proposition to which he must dedicate his life. That would leave a debt balance of fifty thousand against which he would have three thousand cash and his salary. The payment of this three thousand would leave forty-seven thousand. How long



would it take a young man earning twenty-five hundred a year to pay off this sum? Obviously the answer lay in the counter question: How much could the young man save? On how little could he live?

Forbes considered this problem; a man can live on the least possible if he *must*; that was bed-rock truth. He was single, and with no one to support but himself. Say he could live on fifteen dollars per week at the outside, a saving of, say, seventeen hundred a year. That meant the debt would be paid off in twenty-seven years. And this took no account of the interest which should be paid on the money. Say, thirty years in all.

Forbes took another drink. Thirty years! He saw himself a middle-aged man still slaving for the husks of life and giving away the kernel, paying through the nose for something he had never had. It was not an alluring prospect. Then new hope and courage rose within him; his salary would not remain stationary. He had it in himself to be capable of earning almost yearly what would soon wipe out the entire debt; there were architects earning twenty-five thousand a year; yes, even fifty. He was only twenty-one; he had health, strength, courage, ability. What more could a man ask? He had not taken his profession very seriously; in fact, he had not lived up to the high promise shown at college, but now——

Forbes had another drink, and his courage soared still higher. Yes, he would show the stuff that was in him; show Dorothy and her father the sort of man they had spurned. When he was top dog of his profession, known from ocean to ocean, earning as much in a month as Marsland did in a year——well, he would show them; they would see. He would pay off every cent of that debt to the Second National, every cent of interest, too; he would remove the blot from his father's memory so

far as he was able. Yes, he would pay it off if he starved for it!

There is no time like the present, and Forbes began composing a rough draft of the letter he would send to the president of the Chicago Second National. He must, too, begin curtailing expenses right away; the first thing was to give up the apartment with its yearly rental of nine hundred; lucky the lease expired at the end of the month and was paid up. He would notify the agents, Partridge & Stone, in the morning.

Young Forbes had another Scotch high ball on this resolution, and finally went to bed quite fuddled, his troubles seen through a dancing, rosy mist.

## CHAPTER VI.

### THE INEVITABLE HAPPENS.

During the ensuing week Arnold Forbes found that matters looked quite different by the cold, practical light of day.

His position with the Empire Construction Company had altered materially; he had no longer the inside track with the president, and he began to find the going very rough. Marsland treated him strictly as an employee, an inconsequential servant, one of many. He no longer had entrée to the other's private office; in fact, never saw Marsland except in the halls and elevator when the other would bestow a curt nod or ignore him entirely, according as his humor dictated.

The rank and file of the office staff were quick to note the sudden collapse of the favorite, and old jealousies, long treasured, now found settlement. Carker, head of the designing room, and an able, ambitious, but small-minded individual, bitterly jealous of his little authority, had always silently raved against Forbes' intimacy with the president and the consequent leeway it gave the former. Perhaps Forbes, too, had

unconsciously taken advantage of it, but more often than not Marsland himself had been to blame, never hesitating to call the other away from work set him by Carker. Now the latter was having his innings, and he proved equal to the occasion.

Forbes found himself shouldered with all the "dirty" work, the sort of thankless routine stuff he considered himself above, which hitherto had been relegated to the most juvenile and least competent member of the staff. When he protested Carker told him curtly he was there to do as ordered, and if he didn't like it there was plenty of room outdoors. He would have Mr. Forbes understand that he, Carker, was head of the room and didn't want any advice about how to manage it. Carker seemed to be at his elbow every minute of the day, faultfinding, nagging, browbeating; a man impossible to please.

The authority of which he was so bitterly jealous, which Forbes had so long and unconsciously set at defiance, became an unrestrained torrent of venom now that it had an outlet at last. It seemed to Forbes as if the word had been passed to Carker from higher up to go as far as he liked; perhaps this was doing Marsland an injustice, but the impression remained.

Only once had he seen Marsland in private; on the occasion of asking for the return of the money invested in the Sterling Mines Company. Marsland had smiled coldly and in a way that brought the blood to Forbes' face.

"I'm not asking this because of anything that's happened," said Forbes hotly. "You know why I want the money; it isn't mine, but must be paid to that Chicago bank."

"Why do you come to me, Mr. Forbes?" asked the other curtly. "I've nothing to do with your affairs, private or otherwise."

"It was on your earnest advice I invested the money in the Sterling Com-

pany. I understood you were interested in it."

"What do you mean by 'interested'?"

"That you were back of it in a sense."

"Then you understood wrong," said Marsland dryly. "My business is the Empire Construction Company, and I've no other. If I advised you to invest with the Sterling people it was simply because I thought it a good thing. I had no other interest in the matter."

Forbes looked at him. "Mr. Marsland, you gave me to understand plainly, by inference, if not in so many words, that you were interested in the Sterling Company—back of it."

"I gave you to understand nothing of the sort!" retorted the other. "You're making a statement that's absolutely false, and I warn you to be careful! If you gathered that meaning from what I said it's your own fault, not mine. I'm a small minority stockholder precisely like yourself and have absolutely no other interest in the concern, no voice in its management. I invested in it just as you invested in it. Don't come to me about your money, but go to the Sterling Company. Sell out if you want to, but don't bother me about it; I've other and more important things to do."

Marsland wheeled around to his desk, presenting a broad, implacable back, and Forbes had nothing to do but leave.

Subsequently he paid a visit to the ornate offices of the Sterling Mines Company and had an interview with the secretary-treasurer, Mr. Green, a very smart, plausible, and presentable gentleman. The Sterling Company were owners of mining property in northwestern Canada, and Mr. Green explained they were not in the market to buy back their own stock. They needed every cent for development purposes, and he earnestly advised Mr. Forbes not to sell.



"Have you any fault to find with the investment?" he asked.

And Forbes said no. It was true; the quarterly dividends had been paid regularly, ten per cent, and an extra dividend of two and one-half.

Mr. Green then displayed a map of the property, the last engineers' report and balance sheet of the company, reeling off figures and technical data which, very flatteringly, he assumed for granted the other understood perfectly. And Forbes nodded, saying "Yes" and "No" at the proper time, putting in a question here and there, as if he did understand perfectly. He was being treated as an important stockholder, a man able to discriminate in investments, one thoroughly familiar with mining properties, and he could not bring himself to admit that he knew practically nothing of the subject, and, in fact, was rather hazy about finance in general.

After his sudden loss of caste with the Empire Company and the humble position to which he had been relegated, this reception by such a man as Mr. Green was as balm of Gilead to his wounded self-esteem. Also, under Mr. Green's magical and magnetic manner, Forbes began to feel that he really was thoroughly familiar with the subject.

"All we need is capital," wound up Mr. Green, offering the other a cigar. "The stuff's there, and we prefer to go ahead slowly, taking out what we can, rather than overcapitalize. You know that's the only way that pays. The property's as good as wheat—I don't need to say that to you, Mr. Forbes. When conservative men like John Marsland, of the Empire Construction Company, think it good enough for their money—well, men like Marsland know what's what; they never take a breakneck flyer."

Forbes nodded, leaning back in the comfortable chair and pulling at the expensive cigar. He was beginning to

feel the man of affairs, the man he used to be.

"It was through Mr. Marsland I heard of this proposition," he said. "By the way, I suppose he's in pretty deep?"

"Not more than ten thousand," replied Mr. Green frankly. "All the cash he could spare, I guess."

"He's in no way interested in the company?"

Mr. Green opened his eyes. "Oh, no, not at all," he smiled. "Though I'm not saying his name wouldn't be worth something as a director. But we can't afford big salaries. And, as you know, big names mean nothing unless you're trying to unload some wildcat proposition on an unsuspecting public. Good property will always sell itself. All we ask is to be let alone, to develop in our own way, and, naturally, we're fighting shy of being gobbled by the big interests."

"I'm sorry," said Forbes. "I know it's a thoroughly sound and paying investment, but I'll have to pull out. You see, I need the cash."

"Well," said Mr. Green, "that's up to you, Mr. Forbes, and of course you know your own business best. I know that sometimes a dollar in the hand is worth ten next week. You can sell your holdings through any brokerage house, but of course it'll be letting go at a loss, for the market's as flat as stale beer. I ask you to remember that your money's earning double the interest it would in anything outside realty, perhaps, and that it's as safe as an old woman's home. And I guarantee your holdings will double inside ten years—perhaps five. If I may venture to offer you a piece of purely disinterested advice—think it over before letting go. An investment bringing in three thousand a year—not to mention possible increased dividends and a jump in the stock value—is hard to beat anywhere. Remember Standard Oil and a hundred

others; where they started and where they finished."

Forbes promised to think it over, leaving with a warm personal regard for Mr. Green, who was extremely frank, sincere, and wholly likable. There was sound common sense in what he had said. Why not pay the Chicago bank the three thousand a year income, and, when the principal had doubled, sell out and turn over the entire proceeds? In that way the debt could be wiped out in half the time! Yes, undoubtedly this was the best course, the most sane and logical. He was glad he had had the interview with Mr. Green. He would write the Chicago bank, guaranteeing to pay, say, four thousand a year toward settlement of his father's defalcation; in five years that would mean twenty thousand. Then in five years or so the value of his stock would have doubled; that would mean fifty thousand! Fifty and twenty made seventy—almost the entire debt! He began to feel renewed respect for his financial capacity, and, for the first time since that fateful night, ability to cope with the situation.

In the Empire Construction Company, and outside it, Forbes was made to feel his position in other ways, for, though offering no explanation for assuming his new name, the cause of the change had somehow become bruited abroad, and, again, he traced this to a source higher up. And again he may have done Marsland an injustice, yet felt reasonably certain of his suspicions, the president and he himself being the only ones who knew.

In the designing room and among his enemies nothing was said openly about the matter, for, in the past few days, Forbes had developed a look about the mouth and in the eyes that was anything but pleasant, and they had heard of what happened to Adolph Bergstrom. It seemed this young man Forbes came of criminal stock and was

a person of a violent and even dangerous disposition. All this, however, did not prevent audible innuendoes and remarks from flying about, words that put the iron deep in young Forbes' soul and made him go white and trembling.

That designing room became a concrete example of man's inhumanity to man, the thoughtless and would-be humorous adding their quota to the intentionally cruel. Men who ordinarily would have been outraged at sight of even a dog being worried by the pack, flung in the careless jest and humorous gibe almost unconsciously and without realization. The "President's Pet," as Forbes had been dubbed, had become the "goat" of the hour, and it was the fashion to take a surreptitious fling at him. Not one appeared conscious of what the victim suffered, for he gave no sign, pretending not to hear; not one knew that it was only at home he allowed unchecked vent to his pent-up feelings, living over again the day's bitterness and humiliation. And now the bottle of Scotch was constantly at his elbow; it was becoming his comforter, his only friend; in it he sought new courage and forgetfulness.

Yet there was one employee of the Empire Company who had been given the clearer vision, who saw and understood; this was Nan Willoughby, the little overworked stenographer and secretary. She herself had suffered, and knew when others suffered.

It was not long before the inevitable happened, and it came on the Friday of that same week. Forbes knew he was not doing the kind of work worth to the Empire Company twenty-five hundred per year; twelve hundred would have been more like it. Therefore he was not very much surprised when that evening Carker informed him curtly that, beginning with the following Monday, his salary would be twenty-five dollars a week. And when Forbes protested, Carker replied:



"I've my orders to cut down expenses. That's all you're worth, anyway, and you needn't talk to me about it."

Forbes hesitated, and then, putting pride in pocket, sought Marsland for the second time. It was possible the president did not know how Carker was running things.

Marsland listened with ill-concealed impatience. "I can only refer you back to Mr. Carker," he said coldly. "That's his business, not mine."

Forbes had a struggle with his temper before he spoke. "Mr. Carker has it in for me," he said, "and I can't expect justice from him. He won't give me the sort of work that's worth the salary I was earning."

Marsland looked at him. "Mr. Forbes," he said deliberately, "do you know that Mr. Carker himself receives but three thousand? You never earned your former salary, and if you doubt that statement go to any other firm in the city and find out facts for yourself."

"I—I never earned it?"

"No, you never earned it. You're not capable of earning that salary, and you received it in the first instance simply through my generosity; because I wanted to give you a chance and thought you could hold the job. I've found, however, I was very much mistaken in your ability."

Forbes flushed painfully.

Marsland continued: "Mr. Carker hasn't very favorable reports of you; he says you are hardly qualified to do even the kind of work given you of late. In short, you will have to take a brace if you expect to hold even your present position with this firm. I'm sorry, Mr. Forbes, but you've no one to blame but yourself." He looked steadily at the other. "Liquor doesn't make for steadiness of hand or clearness of head; that's a suggestion which,

I hope, for your own sake, won't be wasted."

And young Forbes went home that night heartsick and weary. His salary instead of increasing had been cut in half. Always honest with himself and others in so far as it was given him to be, he detected truth in what Marsland had said; Scotch whisky might be a good comforter, but it was a poor business partner. Owing partly to it and to the nervous tension under which he suffered daily, his hand was losing its cunning, and it was true that Carker, in some instances, had justly found fault with his work. If Marsland and Carker were meanly and spitefully paying off scores he was playing into their hands; by his own incapacity lending honesty and justice to their actions. He must "cut out the booze"; pull himself together and face the music without Dutch courage. He must win back his clearness of head, steadiness of hand, surety of eye.

Acting impulsively on this laudable resolution, Forbes went to the cellaret and threw out the whisky bottle; the fact of its being almost empty rendered the task more easy, and he promised himself solemnly not to buy another.

## CHAPTER VII.

### THE COWARD'S WAY OUT.

Commencing with the following week Forbes began privately applying for another position; he would not put up with the ruthless cut in salary and conditions in the designing room that were becoming unbearable. He would show Marsland he was capable of earning twenty-five hundred a year; yes, and more! It was scurrilous to say that that salary was undeserved, had been due entirely to influence. The Empire Company, thank Heaven! wasn't the only one of its kind in existence, and he could easily get another position. He was keeping strictly to his second

resolution regarding total abstinence, and set out on the quest with renewed courage.

The result was prompt and crushing; budding young architects did not seem to be in great demand, and there were a hundred claimants for every vacancy. It was a bad year for finding work of any kind.

Moreover, he discovered that twenty-five hundred dollars was an unheard-of salary for one of his years and presumable experience, and that he should consider himself lucky with half that amount. He met men twice his age and experience who were only receiving that; others who would have been thankful for it. He found there was little, if any, market for promise; it did not matter what prizes he had taken at the Beaux Arts; what could he do and what had he actually done? And Forbes had to admit that, as yet, he had done nothing but visualize other men's ideas. He had created nothing himself, and his reputation was still before him.

It was brought home to him that, contrary to a sneaking private belief, he was no young flaming genius; that his ability, perhaps, was no more than the average, and that only by unceasing study and labor could he in time win to anything approaching the position he coveted. It was brought home to him in unmistakable terms that he had never actually earned his former salary—he who at times had even thought himself underpaid! He realized that his salary had been jumped to that figure, not through merit, but because of Marsland's influence. That was the result of having a "pull"; everything in excess of what his labors were actually worth, was nothing but a species of graft. The truth was humiliating.

In short, Arnold Forbes for the first time in his life understood the full meaning of the term "competition," together with his own value in the open

market. No longer was he a young man with a putative half million or so at his back; and to some employers, such as John Marsland, this makes all the difference in the world. It was brought home to him that instead of indignantly spurning his present situation he had better hang on to it tooth and nail until he qualified himself for—and *found*—something better.

Forbes had achieved this refreshing viewpoint when the second blow fell.

It came toward the end of a particularly hard and trying day; a day when everybody seemed at his worst, a day when Carker was more faultfinding than usual and the others more prolific with the careless jest and cutting gibe. And Forbes had stood it as long as he humanly could until, suddenly, the explosion came. A harsh and totally unjust criticism from Carker brought an angry retort, an exchange of hot words followed, and then a slur from Carker. And then the designing room came to its feet, for the long-suffering "goat" had suddenly turned, flinging himself on Carker, and, big man though the other was, pinning him by the throat to the wall. A pair of needle-pointed, heavy compasses was in Forbes' right hand, and, for a breathless moment, it looked as if murder would be done. Then Forbes, very white and shaking, slowly released the other and flung the compasses on his desk.

Carker, tugging at his rumpled collar, swallowed once or twice, still shaking over his narrow escape; he tried to speak, then rushed from the room.

A moment later word came that Mr. Marsland wished to see Mr. Forbes. The latter obeyed mechanically; the swift going of his passion had left him weak and dazed.

Carker was in the president's room, and Marsland was wearing his most uncompromising, formidable manner.



"What's the meaning of this, Mr. Forbes?" he demanded curtly. "What have you to say?"

"Nothing," replied the other apathetically.

"I tell you, Mr. Marsland, he would have murdered me!" burst out Carker excitedly. "He would have killed me, and all because I criticized some slovenly work of his. I refuse to work with a man like that; he's dangerous. The men are half afraid of him and his ugly temper, and I can't keep discipline when the least important member of the staff dares to resent my authority and in such a way. This isn't the first time, and I've had enough! It's got to be either him or me, for I won't stand it any longer." He was almost in tears with fright and rage.

Marsland turned to Forbes, and made a curt gesture of dismissal. "Go to the cashier for your week's salary, and then take your things and get out!" he said, with an almost studied brutality.

Miss Willoughby came in from the Suter office, took one look, and withdrew.

The blood came up under Forbes' collar, and he glared at Marsland's broad back; he seemed as if about to speak, and then, as if realizing the utter futility, turned on his heel and left.

In the hall, on the way back to the designing room, he met Adolph Bergstrom. Since the little episode at the Marslands over a week had passed, and it was the first time Bergstrom had seen Forbes or been able to pay his customary strict attention to business. A broad strip of plaster still decorated his nose, which had suffered severely.

At sight of his enemy Bergstrom paled, clenched his hands, and assumed a highly intimidating attitude, but Forbes passed in silence and as if unseeing.

In the designing room not an eye

met his; an exemplary silence and industry reigned over all. They sensed that the "goat" had been discharged, and were ashamed of themselves, knowing the part they had played; each man vaguely conscious for perhaps the first time of what he had added to Forbes' burden. But none spoke a word of apology or regret, and Forbes passed out amid the same silence.

The rest of the week was devoted to further attempts at finding another position, but a malign influence seemed to pursue Arnold Forbes, and promising beginnings ended in failure. When he did succeed in finding a vacancy and in passing the initial interview, the inevitable dialogue followed: "Where were you last employed?" "The Empire Construction Company." "Why did you leave?" And it did not matter what answer was made to this; sometimes Forbes tried to explain the whole affair, sometimes he said merely that he had been dissatisfied. The result, however, was always the same; he never received the promised notification of employment.

He began to realize the sinister significance, the almost hopeless handicap imposed by his summary discharge; always the place of one's last employment is demanded, and always it is communicated with. The Empire Company had given him a black eye and was continuing to do so throughout the trade. Whatever prospective employers learned from it concerning his character was enough to deter them from employing him. This he felt just as he felt that John Marsland had become an active enemy as once he had been his putative friend.

These were very black and bitter days for Arnold Forbes, this searching for work that never came. He was absolutely alone, for his former gay circle of friends had dropped off when they found he could no longer spend with careless hand; that he had ceased

to be a "good fellow" and was now poor company. Also that his scintillating prospects had "gone wallop," and that his father had been nothing but a thieving cashier. In short, he was on the skids, booked for a long ride to the Down-and-out Club, and therefore precisely the sort of person to cut away from. It would not be long before he was borrowing money, telling a long, sad story, and proving a general nuisance.

Those who might have proved true friends had no opportunity of developing, for, after his desertion by the false, Forbes shunned his old haunts and associates. He had become morbidly sensitive about his father, and for this reason steered clear of even Mr. Graves. That gentleman had suffered one of his periodic absences, but, on his return, Forbes showed no disposition to renew the intimacy.

Forbes now thought he had reached the end of his troubles and that he had sampled the worst adversity could bestow. If things can get no worse then they must become better; that was logic. There was a certain grim satisfaction in knowing that nothing more could happen; he could put out his tongue at Hard Luck and tell it to go as far as it liked. He was mistaken again, for there is nothing so bad that it cannot be worse.

The final jest of fate was the sudden and complete collapse of the Sterling Mines Company and with it Forbes' twenty-five thousand, which, according to the amiable secretary-treasurer, had been as "safe as an old women's home." The plausible, sincere, and wholly likable Mr. Green had quietly folded his tent and stolen away in the night, and when Forbes, following the exposé in the press, hurried panic-stricken to the ornate offices in lower Broadway, it was to find the post-office inspectors in charge and a host of clamoring fellow victims. They say there is one born

every minute, and though by far the majority of the Sterling Company's investors were from out of town enough metropolitan ones remained to keep Forbes from feeling lonely. From all he could gather, the mining company had been little better than a rank swindle, and Mr. Green had left his innocent and unsuspecting employees to pay the piper.

Coming up Broadway that evening from the defunct mining company's offices, Forbes suddenly came face to face, eye to eye with Dorothy Marsland and her aunt. They cut him dead, looking through the top of his hat as if he were the most absolute stranger.

This was the last straw. Dorothy's memory had not been easy to efface, and now at sight of her all his old passion awoke; what did it signify that reason told him she was unworthy when his heart clamored for her? Love is not a matter of reason.

That night Forbes deliberately threw all his good resolutions into the gutter, tumbled until midnight in a neighboring café, and took home a quart of his favorite beverage. He was tired trying to be good. What was the use? Nobody cared, and, anyway, the result was the same. It was all very well to preach of manly courage, the never-say-die spirit, and similar inspiring platitudes, but they were absolutely no good for practical ills such as a broken heart and empty pocket; he had tried them to the bitter end. Like his mother, he was face to face with uncompromising facts, not theory. And they had beaten him; he had sense enough to understand when the odds were hopeless. Better enjoy himself while he could, for the time would soon come when he would not be able to afford a bottle of this comforter. There was exactly three thousand dollars between him and the poorhouse; three thousand that belonged rightly to the Second National Bank of Chicago.



It was late afternoon of the following day when Forbes awoke; the bottle of Scotch stood empty on the desk, and the room was in disorder; at some period after midnight he had fallen out of his chair and lain ever since sprawled on the floor in a drunken stupor, a proceeding not calculated to improve the neglected cold that had been hanging on him for the past two weeks.

The wintry twilight found him cowering in the library, in the grip of a high fever and with his nerves shot to pieces; he was half poisoned, and all the inevitable results attendant upon alcoholic excess engulfed him. Revulsion, self-loathing, were upon him; he had reached the depths, the lowest mental and spiritual level, and the future arose before him black, terrifying, and horrific. Memory of the preceding night's degrading debauch was insupportable; he had lain all night on the floor like the most confirmed and shameless drunken sot; he had finished a quart of whisky at one sitting, he whose twenty-first birthday was but two weeks past. The sweat broke out on him, and he cowered farther back in the chair.

Latterly he had been thinking greatly of his father's tragic end, and now as he sat there alone in the twilight, the idea appealed to him with curious fascination and force. Some nameless impulse appeared to be working within him, an impulse he felt that, sooner or later, he must obey. After all, why not? What did life hold that he should wish to live? His father had known when to die. An utter loneliness, a poignant longing to see his mother possessed him, and he began to sob, weakly and spasmodically like a sick child.

This passed, and after another hour's brooding young Forbes arose, quite calm and almost happy. Despite the singing in his ears, the throbbing of his temples, his palsied hands, and blurred vision, he set about his preparations with a certain method and pre-

cision. First he steeled his shattered nerves to hold and control a pen, and with infinite labor wrote the long-deferred letter to the Chicago bank; he inclosed a check for three thousand—his total assets—and stated that he was sorry it was the utmost he could do toward the settlement of his father's theft.

Next a short note to Messrs. Partidge & Stone, apologizing for the inconvenience attaching to his action. For suicide does not help the reputation of a house. The third and last letter was to Mr. Graves, and he smiled wearily as he thought that, of all his numerous "friends," this neighbor, whom he had known for so brief a time, was the only person to whom he felt like making the few simple requests concerning burial. These letters he sealed, addressed, and left on the desk.

Being the smallest room, the library was the logical place for writing finis, and he pulled out the sofa, placed it under the large central chandelier, and to the latter attached the tubing from the small kitchen gas stove. He had completed his preparations when the front-door bell rang.

Forbes paid no heed until its summons demanded his attention; then he realized his elaborate plans might be balked inadvertently at the last moment if this visitor were not attended to and sent about his business.

Reluctantly he opened the front door and discovered Mr. Graves.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### A FRIEND IN NEED.

Afterward Forbes wondered how it came about that, contrary to his wishes and intention, he should have admitted Mr. Graves. As a matter of fact, the explanation was simple, for that gentleman had calmly invited himself.

"If you won't come and see me,"

said Mr. Graves, with his drawling lisp, "then, behold! Mahomet must come to the mountain. Don't deny a lonely man an hour's chat."

Forbes could not be deliberately rude if he tried, and, yielding to the inevitable, he asked the other in. To him the visitor appeared as if seen through a shifting fog and at the terminal of a long vista; or as some one seen in a nightmare, unreal and nebulous. Apparently Mr. Graves' tired blue eyes noticed nothing abnormal, and he maintained an aimless and inconsequential chatter, Forbes replying at random.

Forbes showed his visitor into the library, or, rather, Mr. Graves, as a matter of course, directed himself thither, for it was the room where he had always been received. "I suppose," he remarked, "you've been very busy, for lately I haven't seen much of you. I've missed our games of chess."

Forbes said he had been busy. He was making a desperate attempt to appear natural and at ease.

Mr. Graves was looking at the couch and the rubber tubing hanging from the chandelier. He turned to the other, an unspoken question in his tired blue eyes.

"I—I was going to light the gas stove," explained Forbes. "Don't you think it's cold here? That janitor is so parsimonious with his coal." He tried to laugh. If only he could think and speak rationally! If only Mr. Graves would not look at him like that; if only he would go!

Mr. Graves' blue eyes were neither so nearsighted nor tired as they seemed, but, in fact, owned a rather remarkable capacity for swift and accurate observation. For instance, they had noted such a comparatively trivial thing as a keyhole stuffed with paper.

Mr. Graves arose and very deliberately detached the tubing from the gas jet. "I hope you'll pardon this lib-

erty," he said lightly, "but I've a constitutional antipathy to such heating methods. These contrivances are dangerous, so liable to leak or become detached when one's asleep. I've known so many cases where such accidents resulted fatally." He turned and looked steadily at Forbes.

And at that moment Forbes knew there was no longer need for attempted concealment; knew, in fact, that ever since first entering the room, Mr. Graves had seen and understood all. And, suddenly, full realization of the enormity of this thing he had contemplated burst upon him in all its hideous significance; his eyes wavered and sought the floor, a flush of shame swept over his face, and his lips trembled. Then he dropped into a chair, and, burying head on arms, broke down utterly, and cried as he had not done since the day of his mother's death.

Mr. Graves threw the tubing into the trash basket and laid a hand on the boy's heaving shoulder. "Hastings," he said, "anybody can die, but often it takes a *man* to live!"

Forbes sobbed convulsively.

Mr. Graves' grip tightened. "Look here," he said, "friends are given us so that we may share not only their joys but sorrows. I don't think you've played quite fair with me. I've seen for the past week you were in a bunch of trouble, and I hoped you'd consider me enough of a friend to let me in on it. I came here to-night for that purpose. There may be something I can do; let me try, anyway."

Forbes arose to uncertain feet, and eyed the other dully. "You—you don't understand," he mumbled. "When you do, you'll be like all the rest. I'm not worth knowing," his hunted eyes turning to the empty whisky bottle and from it to the couch. "My name isn't Hastings but Forbes, and I'm not the sort anybody would want to know. My father was a—a thief, and I'm—I'm a



beastly coward! You're right; it takes a man to live and I'm not one! I'm a coward and I took the easiest way out."

Mr. Graves shook his head. "No, you didn't, and you aren't going to take it, either, so don't blame yourself for something that never happened——"

"It's just the same as if it had happened," said Forbes tremulously, flushing dully again.

"Intention and fulfillment aren't the same at all," replied Mr. Graves quietly. "If, for instance, you intended giving me, say, a thousand dollars and you didn't do it, I wouldn't consider it was all the same. Far from it. We're entitled to credit for not carrying out a bad impulse just as it's a mark against us when we don't fulfill a good one. And I know that when it came to the pinch, reason would have returned and you wouldn't have taken the coward's way out. You were off your head——"

Mr. Graves picked up the empty whisky bottle and looked at Forbes. "Is this stuff necessary to you?" he asked. "I mean, do you like the *taste*?" There was a look of concern in his eyes.

"I can't say that I hate it," replied Forbes grimly. "No, it isn't necessary to me; I took it to forget. Until this month I never had more than one drink a day, and many a week not even that. You can't say anything, Mr. Graves, that I don't know; I took it because I was a coward. That's the answer."

Mr. Graves threw the bottle into the trash basket. "I believe they say Queen Mary once remarked that, on her death, 'Calais' would be found written on her heart. Better that, I imagine, than to have 'Scotch' written on your liver. I never received any medals as a temperance lecturer," he added in the same whimsical manner, "but any time you feel like going on the loose just think of the other article in that trash basket, Forbes. The bottle and that piece of rubber tubing are good companions.

"Now sit down and let us have a go at your troubles. There never can be a cure until you find out just what's wrong. Talk them out of your system. Brooding's a poor paying business for anything but a hen."

And presently, under Mr. Graves' half-whimsical, half-serious, but wholly sympathetic and understanding manner, Forbes found himself speaking freely and fully of his troubles, which appeared to have reached a focus on the night preceding his twenty-first birthday. On one point only did he show reserve—his broken engagement. He could not bring himself to speak unkindly of Dorothy Marsland, and attributed the jilting to the excuse advanced initially by Dorothy herself. Mr. Graves, however, was an adept at reading between the lines, but whatever he thought of the matter he kept to himself, liking the boy all the more for his reticence.

Mr. Graves listened for the most part in silence, lying back with closed eyes. Occasionally, when putting a question, he opened a remarkably bright blue eye and cocked it in Forbes' direction, and on such occasions he resembled a very alert and competent sparrow on the lookout for the early worm.

"Er—about this investment of yours," he lisped as the other finished. "You say it was on Mr. Marsland's advice?"

"It was; otherwise I wouldn't have heard of the Sterling Company. I understood he was back of it."

Mr. Graves removed his nose glasses and polished them with a white silk handkerchief. "Have you anything to prove that?"

"No, and Mr. Marsland has denied giving me any such idea; he says I took the wrong meaning out of his words, and that by 'interested' he meant he was only a small stockholder like myself."

Forbes then told of his visit to the Sterling Company, and his conversation with the wholly likable Mr. Green; of the latter's emphatic denial that Marsland was interested in the concern except as a ten-thousand-dollar investor.

"I can't remember exactly what Mr. Marsland said when first speaking to me about the Sterling Mines Company," added Forbes. "I may have misunderstood him, for I didn't pay much attention, and hadn't any great capacity for finance—though I thought otherwise at the time. All the same I certainly understood he was a sort of silent partner in the concern; that it was a side line he didn't want Mr. Muller—you know he's virtually the real owner of the Empire Construction Company—to know anything about until it had fully developed. I certainly got that idea, though I can't say Marsland put it in so many words. Now that we're on the outs, I want to be even more particular about doing him strict justice," he finished earnestly.

Mr. Graves nodded, and Forbes then brought out his stock certificates, which were beautiful examples of the engraver's art.

"What are these worth?" he asked. "I couldn't learn anything very satisfactory from the people at the office." It did not seem strange that he should expect Mr. Graves to know; somehow he knew everything.

Mr. Graves examined them critically through his glasses. "They're worth about three cents a square yard," he said. "You might have them framed and hung up in the front parlor; that's all they're good for—something to look at."

Forbes gasped. He had believed that at least there would be some sort of return. "You mean they aren't marketable at all?"

"Not among sane people, and I guess the other crop has been pretty well picked over," replied Mr. Graves.

"They're absolutely worthless; you couldn't give them away. Don't you understand the company never had any mines that assayed a penny to the ton? The property, adjacent to well-known and paying mining claims, was bought simply for this purpose, and the dividends you and others got were merely part of your own money back; that was the molasses to catch the other flies and keep the pot going until Mr. Green had got enough worth stealing."

He looked at Forbes incredulously. "Is it possible you sold government bonds to invest in this? Didn't you know the stock wasn't even listed on the curb? Didn't you make even the most superficial inquiries?"

Forbes shook his head grimly. "No, it was enough for me that Mr. Marsland was so enthusiastic about it. I suppose to you it doesn't seem possible that in this enlightened age one could be such a profound fool. But, remember, I'm not the only one by a long shot; there are thousands all over the country who invested, and under far more unfavorable circumstances."

"Yes, there's one born every minute," said Mr. Graves sadly, "and the ranker the bait the harder they bite. It's a shame to take the money. Certainly in your case there were extenuating circumstances, and in Mr. Green you were up against a past master of the game. His right name's Hammersly, and a dozen years ago he got a stretch at Atlanta for another sort of high finance that the Federal authorities didn't indorse."

"I'm sorry, Forbes, I didn't know of this investment, for I could have saved you that twenty-five; as it is, you'll never see a cent of it. Hammersly got wind of the postal inspectors' visit, and skipped out with the cash box, and there's no other responsible party to lay a finger on. All his directors and officers were dummies, of course, and Marsland——" He paused.



## CHAPTER IX.

FORBES LEARNS SOMETHING FROM THE  
MYSTERIOUS MR. GRAVES.

Forbes cleared his throat. "Do you mean that Mr. Marsland—— You can't mean he knew it was a fake!"

"Well," said Mr. Graves, "on the whole, Forbes, I think it's a good thing all this happened; not about losing the money, but cutting away from Marsland, for he isn't—— Well, he isn't just the sort worth while."

Forbes opened his eyes. "What do you know about him?" he asked in unaffected astonishment.

"Well——" Mr. Graves rubbed his smooth, aggressive chin. He seemed to have difficulty in putting his thoughts into words. "His New York commercial career has been all right—I mean as president of the Empire Company." He stopped, then added: "It's a moral certainty he was 'steerer' for the Sterling Company, though nothing can be proved. Green, or Hammersly, and he were hand in glove, though I can't say he knew the other's record. And I don't know if Marsland merely got a commission for every investor bagged, or if he had a bigger interest in the concern. Hammersly took the books, of course, and no connection can be proved. Marsland's visits to the office can be explained as those of a stockholder, like yourself. At all events, he's as morally responsible as Hammersly for the loss of your money, and thousands of others; of that I'm certain."

Forbes sat down, dazed and incredulous. "But it's impossible!" he exclaimed. "Why should he want to ruin me? I was engaged to his daughter—for all this happened before my affairs went to smash, before I learned about my father."

"If you should ask me," said Mr. Graves, "I'd say your broken engagement rested solely on your lack of fortune. I know nothing about the lady,

but I do know something about her father. You say he believed you worth half a million or so; well, in that case, you wouldn't feel the loss of twenty-five thousand or even a hundred thousand. It may be he thought the proposition would pay if they had enough capital or that in time he could pay you back. At all events, he depended on a fortune you didn't possess. The fact is Marsland was pushed for money; he's been living beyond his income, and Solomon Muller doesn't pay any higher salaries than he can help."

Again Forbes looked curiously at the other. "How on earth do you know all this? You seem to know more about the Empire Company than ever I did."

Mr. Graves made a deprecating gesture. "Oh, I go round a good bit and know many different kinds of people, so, naturally, I hear lots of odds and ends of queer gossip. I'm intimately acquainted with several post-office inspectors, commercial-agency men, and headquarters detectives. In fact," he concluded, with an ingenuous smile, "I'm a bit of an amateur sleuth myself; I mean that sort of thing has always interested me in a way. What I've told you about Marsland is straight goods; the post-office people know he's mixed up with Hammersly in this thing, but they can't prove any connection, for he's been too slick for them. Hammersly himself is the only man who can give him away, and he isn't the kind to squeal on a pal. I'll say that much for him."

"I should think some of the Sterling Company's employees would know if Marsland was connected in any way with the firm," argued Forbes, still unwilling to believe.

"Knowing and proving are two different propositions," observed Mr. Graves. "You can't find an indictment on suspicion. Rest assured the Federal authorities would have jumped him if they could."

"Then the long and short of it is that Mr. Marsland has virtually done me out of twenty-five thousand, and I've no comeback?"

"That's about the size of it, I'm afraid. Of course," added Mr. Graves solemnly, "you can ask him for it, and no doubt he'll gladly return it."

Forbes got up and walked the floor. "Oh, yes, he'll return it!" he exclaimed. "I've a picture of him doing it! When I spoke to him about it, he told me to go to the Sterling Company, and not bother him with my affairs; that he had advised me to invest simply because he thought it a good thing."

"Of course," nodded Mr. Graves. "And now he'll say he was a victim, too, and lost his ten thousand. And you can't say otherwise. You can't have a man arrested for advising you to invest in a bunko stock if you're unable to prove a criminal interest. You've no legal redress, Forbes, unless they dig up proof which, I'm afraid, they can't. In fact, I know they can't."

Mr. Graves then spoke of Marsland's supposed enmity for Forbes. "What's this about him giving you a black eye in the trade? Are you sure about that?"

"Yes, I am. Every position I apply for, when they make inquiries to the Empire Company, Marsland queers me. In one place they let drop that the Empire Company had fired me because I was of criminal stock and had tried to murder a fellow employee. Can you beat that? The worst of it is there's a certain amount of truth in it all. But I feel Mr. Marsland is my bitter enemy, and would go to any extreme to injure me. He seems to want to put me down and out; to drive me away from the city. I know this sounds absurd," he finished almost apologetically, "but I feel it's true all the same. If he could swindle me out of twenty-five thousand while pretending to be my friend, and when I was engaged to his own daughter, then I think he's capable of about

anything. I used to think there was no man on earth like John Marsland, but now——" He shrugged and picked up his pipe.

Mr. Graves was looking speculatively at his small, perfectly shod feet. "It certainly seems strange that a man in his position would go to such extremes, stoop to such methods," he said slowly. "You can think of no other reason why he should hate you so bitterly?"

"No. It's all because of—— Well, about my broken engagement." Forbes then reluctantly and briefly explained the circumstances. "I accused him of hypocrisy and deceit," he finished, "and he got very angry. I suppose I should have let it go and said nothing, but I was so mad I couldn't keep from letting him know I knew the real reason why the engagement was broken."

"Still, even that doesn't seem sufficient," replied Mr. Graves. "Yet it's human nature to hate the person one has injured. Marsland knew he had swindled you; you were of no further use—in fact, only a nuisance and a constant reminder of his dishonesty. There's no doubt that ever since that night, your days with the Empire Company were numbered, and it was quite characteristic of Marsland to have you practically discharge yourself so it would seem as if he had no interest in the matter. He used Carker as a tool toward that end, and no matter how you acted, you'd have been fired in the long run. At least, after all you've said, that's the way it looks to me."

"Yes, I think you're right," nodded Forbes grimly. "I came to that conclusion myself."

The conversation then turned on Forbes' financial difficulties, and Mr. Graves said: "I commend your strict sense of honesty in attempting to refund your father's defalcation; yet, of course, you know that in no way are you legally responsible? Not even



morally, for neither you nor your mother, you say, saw a penny of it."

Forbes nodded. "That's quite true. At the same time—— Well, you know how you'd feel yourself about it. I must make some attempt to square the debt. Before this thing happened I thought I saw my way clear, but now——" He shrugged again.

"Well, it's bad to swap horses while crossing a stream," remarked the visitor, "so don't send that three thousand to the Chicago bank," eying the letter on the desk which the other had spoken about. "It's no time for altruism, and an exquisite sense of honesty. No offense, Forbes, but that money's your own, and you don't know when you may need it. Now, I've an idea—but I'll let you know if it pans out; meanwhile, take my advice and hang on to that three thousand. Unfortunately, I, myself, never had the faculty of piling up the kopeks, or I'd gladly finance the scheme."

"What is it?" asked Forbes curiously.

But Mr. Graves only laughed. "Merely an idea that came to me a moment ago, and which may mean something or nothing; I'll let you know in a day or so. Meanwhile, the sooner you get into harness again the better. Suppose you go and see Rand & Co.?"

Forbes laughed incredulously, for this was the biggest firm of architects in the city, perhaps the country. "Rand & Co.? Why, I wouldn't have a ghost of a show there! Not even with the best references from the Empire, instead of the worst. Rand & Co. only touch the biggest, highest-class work; they're at the top of the tree, and there's never a vacancy for a rank outsider like myself. Might as well ask me why I don't elect myself President of the United States."

"Oh, it's not quite so bad as that," protested Mr. Graves, unabashed. "I happen to know there's a vacancy just at present with Rand & Co., and

there's nothing like trying, anyway. Go and see Mr. Bond, the business manager; I guarantee you'll get a chance at the position."

Forbes could find nothing to say.

"Of course," added the other, "you can expect only a nominal salary to start——"

"I don't care what it is!" broke in Forbes, with shining eyes, "so long as I get a foothold with that firm. Why, if you were an architect, Mr. Graves, you'd know what it means to be with Rand & Co.! They are the real thing, quite a different type from the Empire, or any other construction company. They're *artists*, and employ only the best men."

Mr. Graves picked up his hat, and held out his hand. "Well, I'm quite sure you'll get the position," he added confidently. "And I'm also sure you'll hold it."

"I will," replied Forbes, with set lips. "I'll hold it if I get it." He meant to say a great deal more, to express in some measure his understanding and appreciation of all the other had done; emotion mastered him, however, and all he could muster was a few incoherent words of thanks which Mr. Graves deftly turned aside.

"One thing more," said the visitor before departing. "Try and forget about that unfortunate incident in your father's life and his end; think only of the good. You've been brooding too much over the other, and it's bad medicine, Forbes. Try and live in the present, not the past; a past for which you were in no way responsible, which you couldn't help and can't help. Look forward, not backward."

Alone, Forbes repressed a shudder as he glanced at the trash basket with its sinister contents. Was it possible he had contemplated suicide? What a change had taken place in the short space of an hour, and all through the influence of one man! The darkness

had lifted; he had found a friend; one true friend where he had expected it least.

Mr. Graves had put heart and soul into him; a return of sanity, hope, and courage. The more he thought of the other, the more wonderful and mysterious he became. Who was he? Who was this next-door neighbor who, apparently, had nothing better to do, no higher ambition than to lead the fashions and gad about town, yet who seemed to see and know everything? This man with the enervated manner, tired blue eyes, and lisping voice who could so confidently predict him a position with a concern like Rand & Co. What was his business? Who was he? Was "Graves" his real name?

Forbes, for the moment, forgot what he had learned concerning Mr. Marsland in thinking of the mysterious Mr. Graves.

## CHAPTER X.

### FORBES DISCOVERS ANOTHER SIDE OF MR. MARSLAND'S CHARACTER.

Quite contrary to Forbes' private fears, the interview with Mr. Bond, of the redoubtable Rand & Co., proved an entire success; so much so that it was plain to be seen some powerful interest had been at work and had previously convinced the firm that he, Arnold Forbes, was the logical candidate for the vacancy—if vacancy there was. For Rand & Co. employed a large and select staff, and, if necessary, room can always be made at the bottom.

Clearly, the influence which secured him this position could be attributed to Mr. Graves, yet the latter's name was not mentioned, nor did Mr. Bond ask Forbes why he had left the Empire Company; the interview was purely a perfunctory affair and almost unnecessary, it being rather apparent that Forbes would have been given a trial,

no matter what his qualifications might be. He had not secured it through merit, but determined he would hold it by merit.

Forbes was offered twelve hundred per year, advancement to depend solely on ability; he would have all the opportunity man could ask, and his future depended entirely on himself. He could hardly credit his good fortune; he was to start work the following Monday. Ambition, long dormant, re-awoke within him. He had learned his lesson, and determined that this time there would be no such thing as failure; his egoism had been effectually punctured, the wind and bombast of self-assertive, all-conquering youth let out. And he was the better for its going. He had found his true level in the practical, workaday world, not the fictitious and flattering one owned previously. No more gay midnight parties with counterfeit friends, and the profitless hunt after pleasure when he should be working. And no more homage to the great god Bacchus. Mr. Graves had been right; he had only to think of the gas tube, the empty whisky bottle, and those awful hours spent cowering in the twilight, nerving himself to meet the specter that beckoned insistently. Somehow, Scotch had lost its fascination.

From the spacious offices of Rand & Co., Forbes, that same day, continued downtown toward his former place of employment. He had been so excited and upset on the day of his peremptory dismissal that he had overlooked a T square and a set of dividers, his mother's last Christmas present. They were valuable only in a sentimental sense, and, apparently, no one had thought it worth while to forward them, if, indeed, any consideration had been given to the matter.

It was drawing toward six o'clock, and Forbes walked slowly, hoping the designing room and offices would be vacant; he had no desire to meet any



of his former associates of whom he had nothing but the most unpleasant recollections. Nor would he even care to see Mr. Marsland, for, very likely, he would only lose his temper again; there was nothing to be gained by accusing the other of fraud, deceit, and treachery, though it might be some relief to tell Marsland just what he thought of him. He had no legal redress, however; his money was gone, and the best thing to do was try and forget.

It was almost seven o'clock when Forbes entered the building; the elevator had stopped running, but from Stemmer, the janitor, he learned that Mr. Marsland was still in his office.

"I guess dis iss vun of his busy nighds," said Stemmer, a slow-moving Teuton, who had never got on very well with the president of the Empire Company. "He gif orders dot he don'd vant to be disturbed. Yes."

Either it was his imagination, or there was something in the other's tone rather than the mere words that caused Forbes to eye him sharply; but Stemmer's innocent blue eyes and heavy, wooden face were expressionless as ever.

Forbes explained his errand. "I suppose it's all right if I go up? I won't disturb Mr. Marsland, as you don't have to go through the offices to reach the designing room."

"Sure," nodded Stemmer. "I guess dot's all righd. Go ahead. You ain'd like a stranger, Mr. Forbes."

Forbes walked up to the third floor, occupied exclusively by the Empire Company. There were three doors; that of the president's private office, the general reception room, and the designing room. Within, a long corridor connected the two latter with the former.

Forbes tiptoed to the designing room, and, as he had suspected, found the door fast; Carker always locked it when the staff had left. The other door,

midway in the hall, yielded, however, and he entered the reception room; then an angry exclamation, a smothered cry reached him, and, instantly, the vague suspicions somehow aroused by the janitor's tone reawoke and became certainty.

He passed swiftly down the inner passage leading to Marsland's private office; the sound of a scuffle came from within, and he heard Miss Willoughby's smothered voice in fierce revolt.

Forbes turned the handle, but it would not yield. He shook the door until the frame rattled.

"Open this door at once, Mr. Marsland, or I'll kick it in!" he exclaimed. He did not raise his voice, but it carried through the wood, clear and penetrating; it rather surprised him to find that, though his blood was on fire, his temper was well in hand; that, already, he was learning self-control.

An interval of silence followed. Then Marsland flung open the door. He was wearing his most formidable manner; his eyes were congested, his face a mottled red. Miss Willoughby, dressed in black, sat at the typewriter desk furiously wiping her eyes, and making heroic efforts at composure.

"What do you want?" demanded Marsland thickly, glowering at Forbes. "What do you mean by this, eh? How dare you come here! How dare you —" Words failed him, and for a moment it seemed as if he was about to hurl his huge carcass on the other; his eyes glared, his mouth worked strangely, his hands opened and closed. It was quite evident he owned as dangerous a temper as any he had accused Forbes of possessing; perhaps it was far more dangerous.

Forbes looked at him with profound contempt and aversion; his last vestige of respect for the man had vanished. John Marsland had proved a far grosser sort, a greater blackguard than he ever suspected. A number of little incidents

that, during the past six months, had come under his observation, to pass unheeded, now assumed an unpleasant significance. He remembered, too, how on the night of his quarrel with Marsland he had passed Miss Willoughby on the stairs and that she looked then as if she had been crying.

He ignored Marsland, and turned to the girl: "Miss Willoughby, may I see you home?"

Already she was busy with hat and coat. "Thank you," she replied in a low voice.

Again Marsland seemed as if about to resort to physical violence. He approached Forbes, and shook a finger in his face, breathing a faint aroma of rich old wine. "I'll have you arrested, young man, for breaking into these premises!" he cried. "You wait and see! I'll teach you a lesson! How dare you come here without permission—you a discharged employee—and presume to give orders to my stenographer!"

He turned threateningly on the girl. "Miss Willoughby, if you leave this office without my permission, you leave it for good! Understand that! I told you I had important work that must be finished."

She made no reply nor, in fact, gave a sign that she had heard, continuing her preparations with a cold, mechanical precision. Forbes, too, said nothing; he waited silently in the doorway, to all appearances unconcerned and self-possessed as if Marsland were a piece of furniture.

And Marsland at length saw the futility of further words; saw it was small use blustering and threatening when he could get no reply or make the slightest impression. He smiled, shrugged, took out a cigar, and turned to his desk.

"Well, Miss Willoughby," he sneered with a hiccup, "certainly you're old enough to have better sense, for only a fool would throw up a good position on the say-so of a disreputable young cub

like that!" waving his cigar at the silent Forbes. "Of course, you know his record and all about his father, so you'll have only yourself to blame when the inevitable happens. However, I suppose there's no use offering advice; old loves have a greater claim than the new——"

"That's about enough, Mr. Marsland," warned Forbes quietly, as the girl reddened painfully.

They passed out together, ignoring Marsland's smile and sneering farewell. Miss Willoughby was trembling, and they walked for some time in silence.

"Has this sort of thing occurred before?" asked Forbes bluntly at length.

"No," she answered, "but I have had to be on my guard against him ever since I was promoted to the post of secretary. Before that—before you came—I was in the auditing department; they were all gentlemen there. Mr. Marsland isn't; he's a—a beast!" She whipped out the words as if finding vent to a long-repressed emotion. "He kept inviting me places, and I kept refusing; making advances I pretended not to see. To-night he had been drinking. I'm greatly in your debt, Mr. Forbes; as much as a girl can be."

Forbes swore to himself. All this had been going on while he was venerating Marsland, thinking there was no one like him. He had been totally blind to this side of the other's character. The girl had suffered in silence, but even Stemmer, the janitor, had his suspicions; of that Forbes was now certain.

"The brute!" he burst out. "Why didn't you leave?"

She laughed mirthlessly. "For the simple reason that I needed the money—as Mr. Marsland knew."

"A jail term is too good for men like that!" exclaimed Forbes. "That's what he should get. I'm sorry now I didn't punch his head. Of course, you won't go back."



"No, of course that's impossible; anyway, I'm discharged. However, I'm glad it's over; I hung on as long as I could because I had to, but now I—I've no one to think of but myself." Her lip trembled.

Forbes then learned that for years Nan Willoughby had been the sole support of an invalid, bedridden mother, and that the latter had died that week. He began to understand what she must have suffered though giving no sign; understood why she could not afford to be discharged, not for her own sake, but for that of her mother. On the whole, she had faced her troubles with greater heart than he.

Confidences beget their like, and presently Forbes found himself speaking about his own affairs. "Though, I suppose," he added, "you knew of my broken engagement, my quarrel with Mr. Marsland, and all that."

She nodded. "I wanted to tell you how sorry I was, but I didn't get the chance, and I never saw you again. I couldn't warn you against Mr. Marsland, though knowing instinctively the sort of man he was. You wouldn't have believed me in the first place——"

"No, that's right," he nodded grimly. "No one could have made me believe anything against Mr. Marsland. I had to find out for myself; it was the only way."

"Besides," added Miss Willoughby, "except for his attitude toward me, I could say nothing against Mr. Marsland. I've always felt that at heart he wasn't quite straight, and that his easy-going manner was more or less of a pose. Also that if necessary he could be brutal and merciless. He has a lot of the brute in him. But I didn't know he was actually dishonest, and what you say about the Sterling Mines Company is a great surprise."

"Well, I can't prove it," said Forbes, "but I've good reason to believe it's so. It's a moral certainty, in fact."

"And you've no redress?"

"None, it seems. I might tell Mr. Marsland what I thought of him—and I may some day—but talk won't bring me anything."

Miss Willoughby shook her head. "I suspected all along that your supposed fortune had a great deal to do with Mr. Marsland's friendship for you. He's that kind. That may not sound nice," she added quickly, with a flush, "but I——"

"I know; don't say a word," he interrupted. "It's nothing but the truth. Recently, I've learned to see better than I did."

Forbes then spoke of Mr. Graves, what an unexpected friend he had proved to be, and of the new position. The girl appeared as genuinely and unaffectedly pleased over the news as if the position were her own.

"I'm so glad!" she exclaimed. "After your quarrel with Mr. Marsland, there was absolutely no chance for you with the Empire Company, and I knew the inevitable would happen sooner or later, as it did. I've never heard the name Graves in the trade, but I suppose your friend is interested in Rand & Co.?"

Forbes laughed. "Not that I know of, and I believe, for that matter, the entire stock is held by the Rand family. I don't know what Mr. Graves' business is; he's something of a mystery to me."

"Well, he must have great influence whatever his business," said Miss Willoughby thoughtfully, "and he must be a very nice man."

"He is," agreed Forbes. "You'd have to know him to appreciate just how wonderful he is."

They chatted in this manner, Forbes escorting the girl to her boarding house. The morrow was Sunday, and, yielding to a sudden impulse, he asked if she would care to go walking. She assented gladly.

Forbes returned home feeling happier

than he had in many a long day. It seemed as if at last the turning point in his troubles had been reached, the crisis passed, and that the future must of necessity be brighter. He found himself thinking of Dorothy Marsland, and now somehow memory did not bring with it the customary sting. True, the wound was as yet unhealed; it still throbbed, but no longer so acutely or insistently.

Forbes saw Mr. Graves that night, told of his success with Rand & Co., and thanked his neighbor for the great influence he had exerted in his behalf.

"It was nothing," said Mr. Graves. "No, I'm not connected with the firm nor 'in the trade,' as you put it," he added, with a smile. "Some time ago I happened to be able to do Mr. Rand a slight service, and he's never forgotten; that's the mystery of my 'great influence.'"

But to Forbes it was still a mystery, yet he could not bring himself to ask Mr. Graves point-blank what manner of service he had rendered to Mr. Rand, and if he was not "in the trade" what was he in?

## CHAPTER XI.

### MR. GRAVES' IDEA.

It was drawing toward the end of the month, and Forbes had begun to look about for a suitable boarding place. As he could not afford to pay storage, he had decided reluctantly that the furniture must be sold. He would be sorry to leave the Gotham, but had no choice in the matter.

A week had passed, and he was well into his new position. The grossly unpleasant conditions that had existed in the designing room of the Empire Company were a thing of the past, and seemed almost as if they had never been; he was now in a totally different atmosphere, and under another type of man than Carker. Also he himself was

perhaps for the first time taking his profession in deadly earnest and giving of his best; at all events, Mr. Bond, who had obeyed orders from higher up, had no cause to regret the step taken. The new employee, contrary to private expectations, was proving an agreeable surprise in the way of efficiency and application.

Miss Willoughby had also secured a new position, one that if it did not pay so well as its predecessor, at least saved her from all she had suffered under Mr. Marsland.

Forbes and she were seeing much of each other; their places of business were almost in the same neighborhood, and often they lunched together, while on both Sundays they had gone for long walks through the woods of Van Cortlandt and Westchester. Sometimes when attacked by conscience, Forbes assured himself he was merely indulging in philanthropic work, trying to alleviate Miss Willoughby's loneliness and sorrow occasioned by the death of her mother; but he was deriving so much pleasure from the growing intimacy, that he knew there was no truth in this. In fact, it was quite evident that the impression made by Dorothy Marsland was fading rapidly, and daily he was becoming more interested in Nan Willoughby.

How much truth there was in this, he did not realize, however, until the day he saw in the society column of a certain journal the brief announcement of Miss Marsland's engagement. She had become affianced to a certain gentleman by the name of Levy, the only son of a wealthy Maiden Lane diamond broker. And Forbes read the announcement without a tremor, his sole emotion a sincere wish that she might find happiness and never discover the sort of man her father was.

The discovery that he no longer cared remotely for Dorothy Marsland staggered Forbes, and, somehow, he felt



rather ashamed, as if his honor and fidelity had been called in question. He had pictured himself going down to the grave treasuring a hopeless and disappointed passion, a silent grief; as a bitterly wronged man, and therefore an interesting figure. He had assured himself solemnly that never, never could he love another, and that his interest and faith in woman had been cruelly killed for all time. And yet within the short space of a month another face, more winsome and true, if less strictly beautiful, was taking shape in his dreams, while Dorothy's superb curves, glorious flesh tints, and crimson, pouting mouth had quite lost their appeal. Was it possible he had even contemplated suicide primarily for the sake of this girl?

Forbes felt like laughing at himself as he folded the paper; now he could even thank Heaven for his jilting. It was some considerable satisfaction, too, that Bergstrom had won nothing for his pains and was still, presumably, the good family friend of which he had boasted instead of an accepted suitor; he had got rid of one rival only to find an insuperable obstacle in the person of Mr. Morris Levy.

As he neared home that night, Forbes received another surprise; two men had come out of the Gotham, and, as they passed on the opposite side of the street, without observing him, he recognized them as Solomon Muller and John Marsland. Their heads were close together, and they talked earnestly. What business had the owner and president-manager of the Empire Company in the Gotham? It was absurd to imagine they had been seeking him, and yet it seemed the most plausible explanation. Rather strange, though, they should remember his address, for, even during all their intimacy, Marsland had never visited the Gotham.

The circumstance was left unexplained, for from the hallboy Forbes

learned that no visitors had called for him, no communication had been left. It must be that Marsland or Muller knew some other tenant of the Gotham.

Then, after dinner, Mr. Graves dropped in, and Forbes casually mentioned the matter, and was quite surprised to find it produced a decided impression on the other.

"Good!" exclaimed Mr. Graves energetically. "That settles it! I think we can safely go ahead now."

"Go ahead with what?" asked Forbes in astonishment.

"With the little idea I spoke to you about a week ago. Don't you remember? Well, this visit of your friends has convinced me I'm right. The idea is to get back from John Marsland some or all of the money he induced you to part with. How does that strike you?"

"Great, if you'll only show me how. Short of entering his house with a jimmy or forging his name to a check, I don't see how I can persuade him to disgorge a cent. If the law can't, certainly I can't."

"There are more ways than one of skinning a cat," remarked Mr. Graves. "This idea of mine might be considered unethical by some, but then Mr. Marsland has not been ethical."

"Short of employing a blackjack or daylight robbery, I'll be glad to get back at him in any way possible," said Forbes briefly. "I haven't forgotten I owe the Chicago Second National seventy-five thousand dollars, even though I'm not legally responsible. That twenty-five thousand Mr. Marsland euchred me out of—or even part of it—if paid to the Chicago bank, would make me feel a great deal easier. He knows that."

"Well, here's the idea," said Mr. Graves.

He opened the evening paper, turned to the sporting page, and, from among the racing news, pointed out an item from the New Orleans track, giving the list of entries for the approaching

Mardi Gras Handicap, a classic event of the year for two-year-olds. Mr. Graves' finger passed over entry after entry until it stopped at the name "Silver Heels."

"Well?" inquired Forbes, wondering what all this could have to do with John Marsland.

"You don't follow the ponies, eh?" Mr. Graves smiled. "You don't know any of the dope?"

Forbes shook his head. Surely it was not possible the other's brilliant idea was merely a proposal to wager his, Forbes', three thousand on a horse race!

"Silver Heels," said Mr. Graves, "is owned by Mr. Vanderslice."

"You mean our landlord?"

"Our landlord, the owner of the Gotham. Now, I happen to know that Mr. Harold Vanderslice's financial affairs aren't in the best of shape; that's one reason why it's so hard to get anything out of the agents. Mr. Vanderslice finds the cost of high living so great that he has no money to waste keeping up the estate; and that estate has steadily dwindled until this apartment house is the chief remaining asset. The building is practically worthless; but, of course, the property value is considerable."

"Is there anything you don't 'happen to know'?" inquired Forbes.

"Oh, any man about town who knows anything at all could tell you about Mr. Vanderslice. He's a spend-thrift, gambler, and fool, and has backed Silver Heels heavily to win the Mardi Gras. If the filly comes through, it means a recouping of his fortunes; if she doesn't, it means he'll have to sell the Gotham to settle his debts. And Silver Heels *won't* come through; I'm banking on the field."

"Uh-huh," said Forbes, still sadly at sea. "Well, what of it?"

"Just this," said the other. "Of

course, you know the Fuller Realty Company?"

Forbes nodded. This was one of the Empire Company's most dangerous rivals against whom John Marsland was exceedingly bitter, accusing them of "stealing his ideas." And there was justice in this, for, following the success of the movement projected by the Empire Company and evolved by Marsland himself, the Fuller people had entered the field with an opposition chain of up-to-the-minute hotels for the modern woman.

"Now," said Mr. Graves, "both the Empire and Fuller Companies need a hotel in this district if they need one anywhere; this neighborhood has become the center of the city——"

"That's right," broke in Forbes with sudden interest. "Mr. Marsland always said that as soon as they began to realize on their investment, the next hotel would be around this neighborhood. In fact, he said the first one should have been started here, only property was so dear and hard to get, and he couldn't induce Muller to sink so much for experimental purposes."

"Exactly," nodded the other, "and as this is about the only available site in the neighborhood, they have their eye on the Gotham. Last week, I heard in a roundabout way that Muller had been up here looking over the ground and making inquiries about this apartment house. The presence of Marsland and him here to-night clinches it."

"Now the idea is this: to-morrow morning you go down to Partridge & Stone and renew your lease for, say, three years, and then, when the Empire Company takes over the property, you can name your own terms."

Forbes was silent for a moment; he appreciated the simplicity and excellence of the idea, but feared it could not be carried out. It sounded too good to be true.



"But can I get a three years' lease?" he asked anxiously.

"There's no reason why not if you play your hand so as not to arouse the agents' suspicions. Partridge & Stone is an old-fashioned firm, and you are young and innocent looking—that's why you must carry out the negotiations in person. They don't know that Vanderslice is going to sell the property—nor do I positively, for that matter—and they'll be only too glad to give a long-term lease. This house is a good deal of a nuisance to them, and it will be a welcome change to find one tenant who, instead of demanding the usual redecoration, undertakes to pay for it out of his own pocket."

"Eh?" said Forbes. "What's that? I'm to have this apartment redecorated, and pay for it out of my own pocket?"

"Yes," said the other imperturbably. "Spend about fifteen hundred or two thousand on it; spread yourself. That will give you a sort of vested interest in the premises and make a logical excuse for demanding a long lease. Tell the agents you've changed your mind about moving out; bring in about living here for so many years, and the sacred associations the place has for you. Say that, seeing they won't do anything in the way of decorating, you'll do it yourself, fix it up right on condition they give a three or four years' lease—a protection to which you're entitled. They still think you're wealthy, you know—they haven't reason to know otherwise—and then you're so young and ingenuous looking."

Forbes laughed suddenly, for, as Mr. Graves enlarged upon the idea, the thing seemed better and better.

"As for the Empire Company," continued Mr. Graves, "the knowledge that a tenant has a three years' lease won't act as a deterrent; such transactions happen daily, and tenants can always be induced to vacate."

"And if they start tearing down the building?"

"Let them. Of course, they will, thinking they can make it so hot for you you'll move out; but it will all be bluff, for they daren't touch this apartment in any way, and you'll have a sharp lawyer to see that they don't."

Forbes laughed again, then sobered. "But suppose Silver Heels *does* win the Mardi Gras? Then Mr. Vanderslice, not having to sell, will name such a figure that Muller won't buy."

"Nothing ventured, nothing gained," said Mr. Graves lightly. "It's a speculation; a legitimate speculation, a legitimate business transaction that occurs daily in the realty market. We're speculating in futures. Silver Heels may win, but she's a twenty-five-to-one shot, and the percentage of chances all through this thing is distinctly with you. You're staking fifteen hundred or so against a comfortable little fortune, and I'm confident you'll win out; I wouldn't have mentioned it to you if I wasn't."

"Then why not get in on it yourself?" asked Forbes, in all sincerity.

Mr. Graves shook his head. "Two tenants wanting a long lease would be sure to arouse the suspicions of even such an old-fashioned firm as Partridge & Stone. No, when the Empire Company acquires the property, I'll move out gracefully with the other tenants. You see, I've nothing against Mr. Marsland personally, but you have; you'll be merely getting back part of the money he induced you to part with. Otherwise, I wouldn't have suggested the idea, for, though it's business, some people might call it nothing but a rank holdup, and not precisely ethical."

"It's what the Empire Company does whenever it gets the chance," exclaimed Forbes grimly. "I've known them to buy and foreclose a mortgage when it meant utter ruin for the owner; they never give a moment's grace."

"Yes, the company has a hard name,"

nodded Mr. Graves; "but, then, you know, business is business. You'll be giving them a dose of their own medicine."

"Understand," he finished, "I don't know Mr. Vanderslice personally, so I haven't been giving away any confidences. I've merely heard things here and there, put two and two together and made four."

"You know a great deal, Mr. Graves; more than any man I ever met. You're a regular walking bureau of information."

Mr. Graves smiled and polished his nose glasses. "Well, you see, it's my business to know things," he replied simply.

## CHAPTER XII.

### THE HOLDUP.

Mr. Graves' idea was proving a brilliant success, matters turning out as he had forecasted; Silver' Heels was running yet, Vanderslice had wired his agents to sell the Gotham, and the Empire Company had bought the property, Adolph Bergstrom conducting the negotiations on one hand and Mr. Partridge on the other.

As Mr. Graves had said, the firm of Partridge & Stone was an old-fashioned one, and the senior partner might have posed for a picture of one of the famous Cheeryble brothers. In fact, two distinct business schools and eras were represented in the person of Jonas Partridge and Adolph Bergstrom, and the latter was not long in discerning and pitying the other's transparent honesty and simple-mindedness. It was rather a good joke, he thought, to find such a firm presuming to do business in New York in the twentieth century. For Mr. Partridge had concealed nothing, frankly admitting it to be a forced sale, quoting Mr. Vanderslice's bed-rock price offhand without any of the customary maneuvers, and finishing by

saying: "There's another matter which your principals, Mr. Bergstrom, must take into consideration. One of the tenants holds a three-year lease and——"

"Oh, that's all right," cut in Bergstrom airily, an expert in such affairs. "He'll leave with the others."

"I don't know about that," replied Mr. Partridge. "I hope so. He's a very nice young man—a mere boy, in fact—and I know he won't want to cause you any trouble. But the circumstances are exceptional, for he has just finished decorating his apartment at a cost of fifteen hundred or so. You see we had no idea Mr. Vanderslice was going to dispose of the property; we'd heard nothing about it until his wire came, otherwise, of course, we wouldn't have given a three-year lease. Mr. Forbes, the tenant in question, is our oldest tenant, and naturally it was only fair to give him a three-year lease when he proposed spending such a sum on decorative purposes. I may add," he finished, with dignified bitterness, "that Mr. Vanderslice has never honored us overmuch with his plans, nor have we had authority to spend the money necessary for the proper upkeep of the property; therefore, to find a permanent tenant like Mr. Forbes——"

"Yes, yes," interrupted Bergstrom, waving his hand impatiently. "I understand perfectly. This isn't our funeral, but your tenant's. A man who spends fifteen hundred on an apartment he doesn't own is a fool, and must expect to lose it. I suppose, though, he's rich, and can afford it."

"Oh, yes, he's rich," nodded Mr. Partridge. "All the same, it's very unfortunate and places me in an awkward position after assuring Mr. Forbes he would be undisturbed——" But Bergstrom had turned a deaf ear; he was never interested in other people's troubles unless he could profit by them. The name "Forbes" had no significance, for



the one-time employee of the Empire Company had been promptly forgotten by all but Marsland.

Bergstrom had no fear that this tenant would prove recalcitrant, and Muller was getting the property at a lower figure than he had been prepared to pay—finally. From the opening negotiations, so confident had the Empire Company been of ultimately securing the site that they had gone ahead with the plans of the proposed hotel, and were ready to start work the day the papers were signed. A matter which occasioned haste was the knowledge that the Fuller people were negotiating for a site a block or two north.

Mr. Stuveysant, a recent acquisition of the Empire Company since Forbes' time, was intrusted with the duty of interviewing the Gotham's tenants; one and all had received a polite notification from the company acquainting them with the sale of the property and that demolition proceedings would be started at once. Mr. Stuveysant was a lawyer; he conveyed the company's regrets in the best possible manner, adjusted all little claims that proved absolutely necessary, and knew how to pour oil on troubled waters in the cheapest yet most efficacious manner. He was middle-aged, benign, persuasive, looked like a high prelate of the church, and was far superior to the man he had supplanted.

The name "Forbes" also bore no special significance to Marsland, if, indeed, he remembered the name of the tenant who Bergstrom said held a three-year lease. "If necessary," he said to Mr. Stuveysant, "tell him we'll refund the sum he paid for decorative purposes—but not, of course, until you've tried the usual method. You shouldn't have any trouble, however; I understand he's young and wealthy, and those are always the easiest kind."

"Oh, it will be all right," replied Stuveysant confidently. "Leave it to me, Mr. Marsland. I'm sure it won't cost

the company a cent. There's nothing like a little politeness and suavity."

But, after a successful and gratifying time with the other tenants—the interview with one—Mr. Graves—had been particularly pleasant and enjoyable—Mr. Stuveysant received a sad shock when he ran up against the presumably wealthy young tenant who looked so boyish and inexperienced. Mr. Stuveysant got off his usual smooth "patter," and Forbes heard him with interest and politeness to the end, then said calmly: "Thanks, but I don't wish to move."

Mr. Stuveysant adjusted his glasses, and took another look at his audience. "But, my dear sir," he replied, very politely and kindly, "don't you see there's really no alternative?"

"No, I don't. I hold a three-year lease, and you can't put me out."

Mr. Stuveysant looked pained; he preferred to talk in symbols, to employ perfumed verbiage, and not the blunt language of commerce. With exceeding courtesy and gentleness, he went over all his former arguments; he explained that his company deplored the necessity of such a move, but there was no choice in the matter, and they would be only too glad to do all in their power to alleviate the inconvenience. They would move, free of charge, Mr. Forbes' goods and chattels to any part of the city he desired, et cetera, et cetera. Surely he understood the circumstances, and would act accordingly. And to all this, Forbes again replied calmly that he preferred to remain where he was.

"But, my dear sir, that's quite impossible! Don't you understand the building will be torn down?" Impatience and vexation were creeping into Mr. Stuveysant's honey tone and manner. This was an uncommonly and unexpectedly stubborn young man!

Forbes leaned back in his chair, and blew smoke in a bored manner. "As for

tearing down the house," he remarked, "Shylock couldn't get his pound of flesh without shedding blood—which, I may remind you, wasn't in the contract—and I don't see, Mr. Stuveysant, how your company proposes to raze this place without disturbing my apartment—which isn't in the contract. Really, I don't see it."

"Is there any valid reason why, under the circumstances, you wish to remain?" demanded the lawyer, striving to cloak his exasperation.

"Just take a look around the room," replied Forbes. "I'll be glad to show you through the rest of the apartment if you like. Do these look like the ordinary decorations? I've spent exactly sixteen hundred, and a lot of valuable time and thought on this place, and I want a chance to enjoy it. I was assured by Mr. Partridge I would be undisturbed for at least three years, and, in declining to move, I'm claiming no more than my lawful rights."

"We'll guarantee to remove all the paneling without a scratch," said Mr. Stuveysant, eyeing the walls and ceiling. "If anything's harmed in the slightest, we'll replace it gladly." But this made no impression, and, reluctantly, he admitted defeat, and played his last card.

"Very well, Mr. Forbes," he said coldly, and with great dignity, "then there remains but one thing more; my company will refund the entire sum spent by you on this apartment. There! that's an unprecedented offer. I had hoped for an easier settlement—in fact, I may add, I fully expected it—but there is nothing small or mean about the Empire Company, and it always does the generous thing. I've power to admit your claim in full, and pay it. We'll say no more, Mr. Forbes; what is the exact amount?" flourishing an ornate fountain pen. "Of course, you will show me the original bills and every item."

"That's all right, Mr. Stuveysant, you're distressing yourself unnecessarily. I'm making no claim; when I do, your company will hear about it."

Mr. Stuveysant's plump face assumed a beautiful cerise hue, and his eyes lost their mild, religious look. "Do I understand you refuse the offer?"

"Most emphatically."

For once in his career the lawyer found himself at loss for words; he had made a great concession, only to have it flatly rejected. His last card had been torn up and thrown in his face, as it were, and he had no authority to play the game further.

"Mr. Forbes," he said at length, reaching for his hat, "I am both surprised and pained, and I hope you'll pardon me if I add that this attitude of yours is totally incomprehensible, and—er—rather suggestive of sharp practice. We've offered all the concessions possible, and you refuse to meet us halfway. Surely I can appeal to your sense of justice and fair play? I know you cannot wish to press an unfair advantage or make capital out of our dilemma, a condition of affairs for which we're in no way to blame."

He had struck the right key, and Forbes colored; it *was* against his whole nature to press an unfair advantage, and, even in the name of business, he could not have brought himself to do this thing were it not for Marsland. Also, he knew from experience, that the Empire Company was far from being the just and generous concern Mr. Stuveysant represented it, and that the latter was merely trying to carry out his orders in any manner possible.

"I'm sorry, Mr. Stuveysant," he said, with finality, "but all argument is useless. I didn't ask your company to buy this property, and I refuse to vacate before my lease expires. All I ask is to be let alone. Good morning."

And Mr. Stuveysant had nothing to



do but return to the office and confess defeat, something he hated to do.

"What?" exclaimed Marsland. "Is it a holdup?"

The lawyer shook his head. "He's not holding out for money; he doesn't know enough for that, nor does he need it, I guess. He's just a pampered, stubborn young ass, accustomed to have his own way, and he can't see a foot before his face. It's sheer cussedness, that's all. He's mad because old Partridge let him go ahead with the decorations without telling him the property was going to change hands; and he's mad at us because we bought it. He won't move a foot to oblige us."

"All right," said Marsland grimly, "then we'll move him. You've done your part; now leave the rest to us."

Accordingly, a few mornings later, Forbes was aroused, at five o'clock, from a refreshing sleep by the most infernal din ever created by man. All the other tenants had moved out, including Mr. Graves, whom Stuveysant had found so agreeable and obliging, and the building was in process of demolition, a premium being offered, apparently, to the workman who could make the most noise. The gang was in charge of a foreman with a voice like a foghorn, and a very truculent manner; bricks, mortar, oaths, and obscenities filled the air, until Forbes, abandoning all efforts at sleep, jumped into his clothes, and went out to remonstrate.

The interview with Mr. Grogan, the burly foreman, was neither complimentary nor effective, however, Forbes soon discovering he was no match for the other, either in a physical or verbal sense. Mr. Grogan said tersely he was carrying out orders, that he had work to do, and if Mr. Forbes didn't like it, he could do the other thing. After a further exchange of pleasantries, Forbes retreated, just escaping a large installment of mortar and several pieces

of brick dropped, of course accidentally, but accurately, from sharpshooters on the roof.

Also, on leaving for the office at eight, another accident happened, and this time with such success that he had to go back and change his clothes.

And that night the infernal din kept up until far into the morning, making sleep impossible.

The war was now on in earnest, and the end of the week found honors in favor of the besieged. Reënforced by a sharp young lawyer recommended by Mr. Graves, Forbes had complained to the board of health, and the Empire Company had been restricted from working at night. Mr. Stuveysant took the matter to court, but the injunction stood; not only Forbes, but the entire neighborhood, had been disturbed, and the public did not propose to suffer for the sake of any construction company ever incorporated.

In return for this victory, Forbes acquired a prominent black eye, donated gratuitously by Mr. Grogan; for the strained relations between them had finally resulted in an open rupture, Forbes, against his better judgment, resenting another successful "accident" with his fists. He had proved no match for the burly foreman, and retired from the fray considerably damaged, but refusing, in this instance, to seek solace in the law.

Thereupon, Mr. Graves, drawing upon his army of diverse acquaintances, had sent over a young man to look after Forbes' apartment during the day; this young man wore a green sweater, and talked out of a convenient angle in his mouth. Fight fans might have recognized him as a willing entertainer who figured in certain middle-weight preliminaries, but Mr. Grogan, however, did not; not until it was too late. He realized his mistake after the black eye he had donated previously to Forbes had been returned with interest

during a lively three-minute session, which congested traffic in the block, taught Mr. Grogan a whole new chapter about the fistic art which he had never guessed, and brought him and his teacher up before the court for a fine of ten dollars for creating a public disturbance. Forbes paid the fine with a grin, and the Empire Company, represented by Mr. Stuveysant, with a scowl. And succeeding this no more "accidents" happened while the young man in the green sweater looked after the Forbes apartment.

At the end of the week, Marsland consulted Bergstrom. "Go over and see what you can do with this fellow," he said shortly. "Money talks, and I think this is beginning to look something like a holdup, no matter what Stuveysant says. I feel he's got this tenant sized up wrong. No one would have stood what he has unless his stake in the game was something more than mere stubbornness. Of course, make the best bargain you can, but go to the length of offering a year's rent if necessary."

The soft-soap period, as represented by Mr. Stuveysant, had passed, and Bergstrom was symbolic of the sledge hammer and cold chisel; it was time for blunt business talk, and the driving of a hard, close bargain.

Despite his rejection by Dorothy, Bergstrom was still a family friend; he never abandoned hope until the last extremity, and believed thoroughly in the modernized proverb: "There's many a slip that's not on the pillow." Dorothy was still Miss Marsland, and therefore might one day be Mrs. Adolph Bergstrom. If one engagement can be broken, so may another. He had known stranger things to happen. Adolph Bergstrom was not without his good points, and a blind, steadfast devotion to Dorothy, an unquestioning belief in her father were not, perhaps, among the least of them.

Thus, Bergstrom's visit to Forbes

was the first intimation gained by the Empire Company of their opponent's identity, and the discovery explained many things to their emissary. For a moment he was at loss what to say, but Forbes, ignoring all that had happened between them, greeted him politely, if formally, and Bergstrom, with characteristic promptitude, got down to business.

"We may as well be frank about this thing, Mr. Forbes," he said curtly. "Of course, you'll vacate, if we make it worth your while; in other words, it's a holdup, and you've worked it quite cleverly, if shamelessly. The ethics of the maneuvers needn't enter into the question, however, for I'm here to talk business, not morality."

"Very good," said Forbes calmly. "Go ahead."

"What's your bed-rock price? You needn't waste time on jewing."

"I agree with you. My price is twenty thousand."

"Twenty thou——" Bergstrom, his mind refusing to grapple with the sum, stared, open-mouthed.

"Exactly, Mr. Bergstrom. Twenty thousand, and not a cent less."

"Your sense of humor, Mr. Forbes, was always a little beyond me."

"Yes," nodded Forbes pleasantly, "somehow you never could take a joke. However, that's my rock-bottom price, so we needn't argue about it."

Bergstrom laughed with evident amusement. "Come, Mr. Forbes, be serious; I'm paid to work, you know. We'll pay you five hundred; five hundred cash, and move you gratis. That's our only offer, and we make it simply to get rid of the inconvenience; it's worth five hundred to us, and not a cent more."

Forbes arose. "I've stated my price; take it, or leave it."

"Great John!" sneered the other, staring, "surely you don't believe for a



moment you'll get it? Why, you're crazy! It's a very enterprising little get-rich-quick scheme, Mr. Forbes, but it won't work; not for a minute. What do you take us for? Twenty thousand!" He laughed again. "Why so modest? Why not a hundred and twenty? You've as much chance of getting it. Take my advice and accept our offer while it stands—five hundred and free removal. Understand? We'll keep it open for twenty-four hours."

"Might as well close it now," said Forbes cheerfully. "Good evening, Mr. Bergstrom."

And Bergstrom had returned to the office undetermined whether to laugh or scowl; for he knew as well as anybody the possible strength of Forbes' position.

Of late John Marsland's temper had been none of the best; he evinced a growing irritation, a lack of self-command that often found expression in uncontrollable bursts of anger that terrorized the office. He complained of being troubled with insomnia, and looked haggard and worn. All this he attributed to overwork, and, once the new hotel was well started, he intimated his intention of going South for a month's rest.

Bergstrom's account of his interview therefore produced in Marsland one of his now characteristic outbursts, and he stormed up and down the office.

"I could wring that fellow's neck!" he cried, smashing a fist on the desk. "Wherever I turn it's Forbes, Forbes, Forbes! He crosses me at every turn! The infernal little blackmailer! Twenty thousand, eh? He won't get twenty cents! I'll show him what his game's worth!"

He mastered himself with an effort, and added: "This is nothing but the foulest kind of spite work, Bergstrom. He has it in for us; you, because you showed him up; the company, because it fired him, and me, because—because

—well, because on account of Dorothy," he added hastily.

Bergstrom nodded. "He's played the game like a veteran, I'll say that much for him. I didn't think he had it in him." There was grudging admiration in his tone.

Marsland glared. "You mean you didn't suspect he was such a blackguard and barefaced thief! No more did I, though discovering to my cost he was anything but honest. I suppose the son of a thief can't help being one!"

Bergstrom shook his head. "After all," he said, "it's business, a legitimate speculation, a slick business deal that's pulled off every day if one's clever and lucky enough. In fact, I don't mind saying I'd be glad to get a chance at such a paying proposition."

"It's barefaced robbery, that's what it is!" snarled Marsland. "I'm surprised at you trying to excuse it. Don't talk to me about it being a legitimate speculation; we've been sold out, that's all! How did that young blackmailer know we were going to buy the site? How did he know—when even Partidge was ignorant—that Vanderslice was going to sell? There's nothing legitimate about it! I tell you, we've been sold out, and I can name the person."

Bergstrom looked politely skeptical. "Who?" he asked.

"That Willoughby girl!" exclaimed Marsland. "I always suspected her of double-dealing; in fact, I got rid of her because she was always snooping among my private papers. Forbes and she were thick as thieves, and she's told him our plans, sold us out while taking our money."

Bergstrom, whatever his methods when self-interest was at stake or his animosity aroused, had a sense of justice; he had always liked Miss Willoughby, thought highly of her, and considered her inexplicable dismissal a distinct loss to the firm.

"That wouldn't explain how Forbes

knew Vanderslice was going to sell," he replied. "Miss Willoughby would have no knowledge of that. I think you're doing her an injustice; she wasn't that kind——"

"It doesn't matter what you think!" interrupted Marsland, with another sudden outburst of anger. "It's enough that I say so!"

Bergstrom was silent; he had too much respect and admiration for the other to quarrel with him; he also realized that Marsland had not been himself for the past few weeks, that his nerves were on edge, and that he needed a vacation.

"Well," said Bergstrom pacifically, "the question is what's to be done about Forbes?"

"Done? Nothing!" snapped the other. "He's simply bluffing, and I'll call it. He'll accept your offer; you see if he doesn't."

### CHAPTER XIII.

#### MARSLAND INDIGNANTLY REJECTS A VERY HANDSOME BONUS.

But Forbes did not accept the offer, and Marsland was forced to realize there was no use attempting to fool himself further; he must recognize the strength of the other's hand, sink pride, and effect some sort of a compromise. Time was passing, the Fuller people had acquired a site in the adjoining block, and demolition proceedings at the Gotham were almost at a standstill, little being accomplished despite the outward show of bustle and activity. The building had been razed almost to Forbes' apartment, but beyond that it was impossible to proceed, Mr. Steele, Forbes' lawyer, seeming to be on the scene perpetually, and taking particular care no damage was done the apartment. He was proving a very sharp thorn in the side of the Empire Company, and it was he who had advised Forbes concerning the lease Mr. Part-

ridge had signed, a document that admirably protected the young man's interests.

Marsland therefore capitulated with much inward anathema, still blind to the true situation or the fact that Forbes intended holding out for the preposterous sum demanded. Accordingly, Bergstrom was dispatched to renew the haggling operations, his instructions being to double the original offer, and, if necessary, go the length of two thousand.

This being refused, Marsland, in due course and with additional profanity, made it five thousand, but when even double this amount was likewise rejected, he raised the roof.

"What?" he howled. "He won't take ten thousand? Then, in Heaven's name, what will he take? Answer me that! What the devil will he take?"

"Twenty thousand," replied Bergstrom dispiritedly. "He won't come down a cent. I've talked myself hoarse but it's no use; you might as well argue with a tombstone."

Marsland raised another howl. "Twenty thousand!" he raved. "Why, the fool's crazy! He's out of his mind!"

He walked up and down the office, waving his arms impotently. "It's an outrage! Unheard of! Do you think for a minute he'll get it?"

Bergstrom shrugged. "I don't see any way out; he's got us by the scruff of the neck, and he knows it. We're losing money every day, and either we'll have to pay or quit cold. We can't afford to turn the district over to the Fuller people, and yet we might as well if they get in first and grab the trade. We've gone too far to retreat, and there's far more to be gained by going ahead even if we have to drop this twenty thousand. Much as I hate to admit it, I don't see any other way out of it."

"You don't, eh?" exclaimed Marsland. "Well, understand, I'll see that



young blackguard hanged before I pay twenty thousand! Yes, or anything like it! What do you take me for, anyway? If that's the best you can do, it's mighty rotten, that's all I say!"

"I've done all I could," retorted Bergstrom, with compressed lips. "You can't, by main force, make a man take something he doesn't want. I know I've failed, but I've done my level best, and if anybody can do better I'll be only too glad to hand over the job."

"I don't want any of your impudence!" retorted Marsland. "The Lord knows I can get enough without paying for it. I say you've acted very badly throughout this matter, managed it with surprising incompetence. In the very first instance it's entirely your fault we find ourselves in this position, for Partidge told you before the papers were signed that a tenant held a three-year lease. If you'd taken the trouble to find out that tenant's identity all this would have been saved——"

"I think that's hardly fair, Mr. Marsland. I reported the matter fully to you before the papers were signed, and you agreed with me that we'd have no trouble, that it wasn't worth bothering over. In the past we never had any difficulty, and we'd no reason to suspect in this instance——"

"Enough!" cried the other. "Anyway, it's quite evident you can't handle this situation, so I'll attend to it myself. Mr. Forbes will find this company isn't the sucker he thinks it!" Thereupon he had jammed on his hat and stormed out.

He called on Forbes that evening, presenting all the dignity and formidability of manner which had once impressed the other so strongly. In fact, so far as Marsland was concerned, the disgraceful affair in connection with Miss Willoughby was quite forgotten. Forbes, however, noticed the change in the other's appearance since last they met; the puffy bags under the eyes, the

unwholesome complexion, a peculiar glare at times in the eyes, and the nervous twitching of the mouth. He surmised that the easy aplomb and assurance were but a pose, and that John Marsland, for some reason, had become a victim of "nerves" and was forced to exert the utmost self-control to keep from showing it.

Marsland, adopting a lofty, distant, dignified attitude, plunged at once into the object of his visit. "Of course, Mr. Forbes, you know as well as I that the sum you ask is utterly preposterous, and quite out of the question——"

"We needn't discuss that, Mr. Marsland; my price is twenty thousand, as I stated to Mr. Bergstrom from the first, and recognition of that fact will save talk and time."

Marsland glared. "You are quite determined on that figure?"

"Quite."

"Nothing will induce you to change it?"

"Nothing."

"I suppose it's quite useless to appeal to your sense of fairness and honesty, Mr. Forbes?"

"I fail to see anything dishonest in my position, Mr. Marsland. I'm not asking your company to buy my lease. If you want it, the price is twenty thousand; if you don't——" He shrugged politely. "Surely, as a business man, you can't blame me for taking advantage of conditions, and preferring to sell at a profit rather than a loss?"

Marsland waved his arms. "Don't talk that way to me! I'm neither a child nor a fool. If you got two thousand for your lease and every piece of junk in this place, you'd be coming out ahead of the game; you know that as well as I. It's nothing but a barefaced attempt at swindling, Mr. Forbes, and any decent man would be ashamed to attempt——"

"If that's all you have to say, Mr. Marsland——"

"Yes, and I've a lot more to say!" cried Marsland. "I've to say that your cupidity has got the better of your caution; you've overplayed the hand, young man; lost your market! We offered you ten thousand, and you refused; now I offer you five thousand, and if you don't take that you'll get nothing! Not a cursed cent! You won't interfere with our plans, either; not for a minute. We'll build the new hotel round this apartment, understand? When we've finished, this apartment will be in the middle of the kitchens. We'll see how you like that!"

Forbes smiled. "I refuse to be bluffed, Mr. Marsland. Give me credit for knowing a little about architecture. How do you propose to have your kitchens on the ground floor, front—right in the middle of your entrance?"

"I'll show you! I'll show you!" cried the other, though knowing the impossibility of the thing. "I'll show you if the Empire Company intends being the victim of such blackguardly practice! Blackguardly, Mr. Forbes, for you're acting like a blackguard! It's not business and never was; it's nothing but low-down, contemptible spite! Spite because you were discharged by the firm, and because my daughter, thank Heaven! found out your true character in time. This is your dastardly, scurrilous revenge!" He had worked himself up into a fine temper, and Forbes was now the one to show his self-control.

"You're quite right in saying there's something back of my attitude," he replied composedly, "but my treatment by Miss Marsland or the firm has nothing whatever to do with it. Let me refresh your memory, Mr. Marsland."

From the desk he brought the collection of elaborately engraved stock certificates of the defunct Sterling Mines Company, and spread them out carefully before the other's eyes.

"A splendid investment," he murmured, quoting some previous words of

Marsland's. "Absolutely safe; pays ten per cent and extra dividends. Here is twenty-five thousand dollars' worth, Mr. Marsland. Now, on the day I get twenty thousand for my lease, I make you a free present of these. Think of it! An absolutely free gift of twenty-five thousand dollars' worth of stock in such a sound, reputable, well-paying concern as the Sterling Mines Company about which you've always been so enthusiastic! Isn't that an unheard-of bonus? Can you still accuse me of dishonesty and sharp practice when I offer to give up my lease and twenty-five thousand in absolutely gilt-edged security in return for a mere twenty thousand? Surely that's a most generous offer, the sort of bargain the Empire Company prefers, and always tries to make."

Marsland's face was a study; his eyes were congested, and his mouth worked as if the torrent of his thoughts defied expression.

"Perhaps you wonder why I make it twenty thousand instead of twenty-five," continued Forbes politely. "I'll tell you, Mr. Marsland: Five thousand I charge off to profit and loss; I deserve to lose five thousand for being such a fool. Experience, to be effective, should cost something. I've had my experience, you've taught me a good deal, and I'm quite willing to pay for it."

Marsland found his voice. He approached the desk, and pointed a trembling finger at the array of stock certificates. "What do you mean?" he thundered. "Why—why, you infernal young whelp, do you dare insinuate that I had anything to do with the loss of your beggarly money? Is that what you mean, eh? I'll have you up in court, young man! I'll show you if there's a libel law in this country! I'll teach you what defamation of character means! We'll see if worthless young fools and vagabonds can make any sort of reckless statement, and get away



with it! Come, out with it; let me understand you fully. Are you charging me with——"

"I'm charging you with nothing, Mr. Marsland," said Forbes in a bored voice. "You are accusing yourself. I'm not saying you knew Mr. Green's right name was Hammersly, and that he was a rank swindler. Neither am I saying you knew the Sterling Company to be nothing but a fraud. And I'm not saying you were interested in it nor even that you got a commission for the money you induced me to invest. Oh, no, I haven't made any reckless statements like that. I've merely offered you—as a little present for buying my lease—this lot of valuable stock, so surely there's no reason to get angry and excited and talk about libel and defamation of character. Really, I thought I was doing you a great kindness, the inestimable favor done me when you induced me to invest with the Sterling people."

Marsland swallowed two or three times. Positive, vindictive hatred was leaping in his eyes, and at that moment he looked quite capable of murder; as if his twitching hands were itching to pick up the chair they grasped and brain Forbes where he stood.

With a visible effort he mastered himself, picked up his hat, and strode to the door, where he turned and glared. "Mr. Forbes, I warn you about how you use that vile tongue of yours!" he said hoarsely. "Don't push me too far, for though I've condescended to ignore these scurrilous insinuations, I won't stand a repetition of them in public or private. You repeat them at your peril! As for the other matter, you've acted like a thief, and the son of a thief! I need say no more."

He tore open the door, slamming it after him with a bang, before Forbes could reply. The reference to his father hurt, as it was meant to; the brutal probing of a wound by no means healed.

He could have struck the words from the other's mouth.

In the outer hall, Marsland, half blind with rage, and cursing aloud, collided with a visitor who was about to ring at Forbes' apartment; this visitor was Mr. Graves. Marsland, beginning an angry exclamation, suddenly paused and stared, the color slowly leaving his congested face. Then, with a muttered word of apology for his awkward haste, he hurried out.

Mr. Graves found Forbes sitting silent and gloomy at his desk.

"I met your friend Marsland outside," he greeted, "and he was looking a bit peevish—almost walked over me, in fact. Must have been a lively session, for you don't look particularly happy, either. Does he still refuse to recognize the inevitable?"

Forbes forced a smile. "Oh, the interview was all right so far as that goes." And he told briefly what had passed.

Mr. Graves nodded. "That twenty thousand's as good as in your pocket——"

"You mean the Chicago Second National."

"As you like. You may be sure, Muller doesn't know yet of the situation, but Marsland will have to tell him without further delay; then there will be a fine old row, and Muller will pay you a visit and beg you, with tears in his eyes and by all you hold sacred, to let up. When he understands it's no use, the old Shylock will send your check. He'll see the ultimate profit lies in going ahead; that the only thing to do is pay up, and the sooner the better. Our little idea has been a great success."

"Thanks to you," replied Forbes.

"Not a bit of it. You've played a difficult hand exceedingly well. You've become quite a business man—one after Muller's own heart if he didn't happen to be the goat."

"Well, I'll be glad when it's over," replied Forbes grimly. "I don't know if my temper can hold out much longer. I've earned the money in the way of hard words; I've been called everything from a vagabond to a thief. I don't mind for myself, but I can't stand it when they throw up about my father. You told me to forget, to look forward, not backward; to live in the future, not the past. Sound advice, which I've tried, and all to no purpose; I'm not allowed to forget, and, anyway, I—I *can't* forget! I think of him constantly; I can't get him out of my mind. And when people refer to him as a thief I could kill them, though knowing it's nothing but the truth!"

Mr. Graves took a turn or two about the room, fingering his unlighted cigarette. "Forbes, would you mind letting me see that letter your mother left?" he asked suddenly. "You've kept it, I suppose?"

The other nodded, looking rather surprised. "Yes, read it if you like. You and—and Miss Willoughby are the only ones I wouldn't mind showing it to."

Mr. Graves had met Miss Willoughby and owned rather a good idea of how matters stood between Forbes and her.

Mr. Graves now read Mrs. Forbes' letter through in silence, and, when finished, reread certain parts of it. "Your mother seems to have had a strong conviction of her husband's innocence," he observed at length. "A conviction, of course, entirely unsupported by the facts in the case."

Forbes nodded. "Yet I can understand, for it's not merely the blind, unquestioning faith of the woman who loves; I thought that once, but have reversed my opinion. My mother points out that the whole affair was so entirely opposed to my father's character as she knew it, and I can't believe he had a double personality and showed her the best. My mother had brains and discernment; and such a

woman, no matter how blind her love may be, cannot live with a husband six years or so without gaining a pretty accurate knowledge of his true character. Doesn't it seem so to you?"

Mr. Graves nodded again. "And what was your own impression of your father? I know you were only a youngster at the time; but, as a rule, children have finer, truer instincts than adults."

"He left so vivid an impression on me," replied Forbes earnestly, "that it seems but yesterday since I last saw him. To me he always represented all that was kind, good, and noble. His memory has been a great influence in my life, and when I lost it—well, I needn't speak of that time." A picture of that same room in which he now sat, as it had looked one night, had arisen before him, and he saw again the rubber tubing hanging from the chandelier and the waiting couch.

Mr. Graves was lying back in his favorite attitude, eyes closed, legs crossed, and the unlighted cigarette hanging from his clean-cut lips. He opened a bright blue eye and cocked it at Forbes. "May I see those letters of which your mother speaks?"

"You mean my father's?"

"Yes. I hope you didn't destroy them?" There was concern in Mr. Graves' voice, and he sat up suddenly.

"No," said Forbes. "I was going to, but changed my mind. Here they are."

The other spent a long time over them, reading each one at leisure. "Now," he mused at length, "if only I were a real detective, like the kind one reads about, instead of being a mere bungling amateur, these letters would be sure to prove a veritable mine of startling information; they would disclose to me at a glance what both you and your mother failed to see. For instance, I might immediately pronounce them forgeries; therefore your father was innocent—guilty neither of suicide nor theft. I might even go so



far as to say he still lives, and, from some mysterious source at hand, produce him in the flesh——”

“It’s not a joking matter to me, Mr. Graves.”

“I beg your pardon, Forbes; I’m sure I didn’t mean to joke or hurt your feelings in any way. I was simply thinking aloud—sometimes an unfortunate habit of mine. I was wishing I were that sort of superhuman detective who smooths away all trouble, unravels the tangled skein, unmasks the villain at the crucial moment, and makes the happy ending in the last chapter. Being merely a normal, humdrum sort of fellow has its serious drawbacks.”

“You’re far from being humdrum,” exclaimed Forbes impulsively. “You’re the most wonderful man I ever met and the best friend I ever had. You’ve smoothed away a lot of trouble for me, and you’ve done far more than I can ever thank you for! But even *you* can’t accomplish the impossible; you can’t twist facts to suit yourself or me. And there are the facts!” pointing to his father’s letters.

“God knows,” he added passionately, “I’ve tried, against reason, to deny them and believe him innocent! I’ve tried to give them and the world the lie! But it’s no use, it’s no use. I simply can’t blind myself as did my mother. There are the facts which the whole world has verified!”

“The whole world has been dead wrong before this, my boy,” replied Mr. Graves calmly, “and they say faith can move mountains. I’m rather impressed with the faith your mother showed, her conviction of your father’s innocence. At any rate, may I have these letters of his?”

“What possible use can they be, Mr. Graves? Surely you aren’t holding out the impossible hope——”

“I’m holding out nothing, Forbes; I merely want the letters for a few

days, call it curiosity or anything you like. May I have them?”

“Yes, certainly; you know you may.”

In this wise was the primary object of Mr. Graves’ visit attained.

## CHAPTER XIV.

### VICTORY. SOMETHING CONCERNING THE MYSTERIOUS MR. GRAVES. A GREAT TEMPTATION.

Mr. Graves again proved an accurate prophet. Not many days passed before Solomon Muller, disguised as a gentleman, paid Forbes a visit in person.

The Empire Company was merely one of many successful enterprises conducted by the graduate from Hester Street, his visits to the office were infrequent, active control was vested in Marsland, and therefore the latter had been able to keep secret the “holdup.” When, however, he found that Forbes could be neither bullied nor bluffed, and that no form of compromise was to be effected, it became his painful duty to acquaint Muller with the facts. The fine row, predicted by Mr. Graves, followed, Muller contenting himself with calling Bergstrom and Marsland fools, but thinking things for which he could have been arrested. He was too shrewd a business man to underestimate the situation, realizing at once that Forbes had them checkmated. True to his character, however, and the traditions of his race, he did not propose to yield to the inevitable until he had exhausted all his art and eloquence.

He greeted Forbes like a long-lost brother, shaking him warmly by the hand and inquiring after his health in the most solicitous fashion. He spoke of the personal sorrow occasioned by Forbes’ sudden and unaccountable resignation from the Empire Company—just as if he had not known and approved of all the facts—and concluded with: “Of course, all dis iss a shoke,

Mr. Vorbes, dis asking tventy dousand for your lease. A very goot shoke. Yes."

"Yes," agreed Forbes, "but it's not on me, Mr. Muller. I'm glad you see it, for Mr. Bergstrom and Mr. Marsland couldn't, though I tried to point it out to them. It's a relief to find one of your company with a sense of humor."

Muller did possess a sense of humor, but somehow could not exert it at that moment. "Twenty dousand!" he groaned. "Mein Gott! Mr. Vorbes, be reasonable! Vot haf I ever done to you dot you should use me so?"

"Why, nothing, Mr. Muller. This is purely a little business speculation, and if I'm aiming at anybody perhaps it's Mr. Marsland. Now, if you ask him, no doubt he'll explain all about it. Really you can't blame me for seeing and taking a legitimate chance of earning an honest penny."

And after half an hour's sweating argument Muller condescended to recognize the inevitable. "Mr. Vorbes," he said grimly, "any dime you dink of changing your job, come to me. As an architect you are no goot, but as a business man—vell, you haf possibilities. Yes, you haf possibilities. I say no more."

It was the following day that Forbes at last learned some definite and astonishing facts concerning his whilom neighbor and the person to whom he owed so much; and it was rather remarkable that the information should come from Miss Willoughby, whose acquaintance with Mr. Graves was of the briefest.

Forbes had lunched with her as usual, relating his interview with Muller, which he considered the last step in the campaign. He then spoke of the monumental debt he owed Mr. Graves.

"By the way," said Miss Willoughby, a twinkle in her gray eyes, "that reminds me. I've learned something

about your mysterious Mr. Graves; in fact, I know all about him. He's no longer a mystery."

Forbes stared. "You? How should you know?"

"Well, you see, he's rather well known in certain quarters, and I'm only surprised you didn't find it out for yourself. I know a reporter on the *Sun*—you know that Mr. Davis you met—and he told me. It was really all a coincidence, though, for I ran into Mr. Davis in Forty-second Street yesterday, and while we chatted a moment who should pass but your Mr. Graves, who bowed to me and lifted his hat in that Beau Brummel manner of his. To my surprise, Mr. Davis evidently knew him, too, and so, after a really ridiculous lot of cross-questions and crooked answers, I learned his right name and identity—for Graves isn't his name at all. Now I'll give you three guesses who and what he is." She leaned forward, laughing, flushed, and excited. "Come, three guesses!"

Forbes shook his head. "It's no use. I'd guess all around the compass, for I haven't the slightest idea. He's always been a mystery to me. You don't mean to say he actually labors for a living?"

"Yes, and hard, too."

Forbes groaned. "You're taking away all the romance; you'll be telling me next he's a hard-working butcher, grocer, or fishmonger."

Miss Willoughby laughed and clapped her hands. "The three guesses, and all wrong! I'll tell you; his name is Mr. James Blunt, and he's the head of a big detective and inquiry agency—perhaps the biggest in the world. He used to be at headquarters and with the Manhattan Surveillance Company. In short, my dear Arnold, he's none other than the 'Lisping Jimmie' you and I and every one have read about. There! What do you think of that?"

Forbes' expression showed what he



thought of it. "W-what!" he stammered. "Lisping Jimmie—why—why, you're fooling, Nan. This is one of your peculiar jokes. Come, honest now!"

"No. Really, truly, and honestly, no, Arnold. "Cross-my-heart-hope-I-may-die. Mr. Davis knows him well. Don't you see how it explains everything? His almost uncanny knowledge of people and affairs; his influence with such a firm as Rand & Co. His influence, you might say, is national in a sense, and Mr. Davis knows the sort of service done in Mr. Rand's case; it was the extrication of his son from the clutches of a select coterie of black-mailers. And Mr. Davis says he's just like that, always helping the under dog if his cause be just, and often finding more intellectual pleasure than pecuniary profit in cases that interest him."

Forbes sat back and strove to digest the startling information; of all the weird guesses he had hazarded at times concerning "Mr. Graves," none surpassed the actual, matter-of-fact truth. He wondered at the blindness he had shown. He had listened almost daily to the peculiar affected lisp which had earned the other his sobriquet; he had noted and commented upon all those mannerisms and features with which, through type and camera, he and countless others had become familiar. Who, in fact, had not heard of "Lisping Jimmie" Blunt, the man who, beginning as plain headquarters' detective, had achieved success in a string of sensational and baffling cases until now he headed an agency whose arms virtually encircled the globe.

Forbes almost smiled audibly as he thought of Mr. Blunt's words: "Now if only I were a real detective, like the kind one reads about, instead of being a mere bungling amateur——" A real detective like the kind one reads about? He was all that and more; infinitely more.

A letter was waiting for Forbes when he reached home that night; a letter from the Empire Company containing a check for twenty thousand dollars and a curt notice to the effect that they expected him to vacate the premises within twenty-four hours. The check was signed by Marsland and countersigned by Muller, and Forbes eyed it with conflicting emotions; it meant victory, sweeping and emphatic.

In a few weeks, he thought, he had acquired, and almost without effort, the equivalent of eight years' labor at his former salary; almost seventeen years at his present one. This was how the great majority of fortunes were made; not by the slow and painful process of saving cent by cent, dollar by dollar, nor yet by investing in such schemes as those offered by a concern like the Sterling Mines Company, but simply by using one's brains and seizing an opportunity when it presented itself. Nor were such opportunities confined to the realty market; they were cropping up daily in every branch of endeavor to be grasped and utilized by the wide-awake. For instance, any one might have done this thing, but it had remained for Mr. Blunt to recognize the opportunity; he had no special inside information, but had merely used his brains, and, by inference and deduction, accurately forecasted coming events. Such, in the abstract, was the method of all great financiers.

This knowledge acted as a healthy, sobering influence on Forbes and kept him from being dazzled by success; for he knew the entire credit belonged to Mr. James Blunt, not himself. However, the little business conflict with the Empire Company had taught him much; his old, careless, improvident, happy-go-lucky characteristics had vanished, and he had become alert, clear-eyed, and keen-witted for the battle of life. The past few months and association with such a man as Mr. Blunt

had taught him much, nor could the sane, wholesome influence of Nan Willoughby be lightly estimated.

That twenty-thousand-dollar check also meant much to Forbes, and in quite a different way; it represented a huge, gigantic temptation—the biggest that had occurred in his life since his signal triumph over the dawning craving for alcohol. This occurred to him now as he stood fingering the check. To him twenty thousand represented a huge fortune, yet it meant infinitely more than that, which could not be put into words or figures; it meant he could now ask Nan Willoughby that question old as time itself yet ever new. He was no egoist, neither was he a fool, and he knew what her answer must be, for he had seen it hovering in her eyes more than once. Yet he had said nothing, believing he had no right to speak when there was no prospect of marriage. What right had he to bind her to an engagement that might have no ending? How could he hope to marry on twelve hundred a year and with a seventy-five-thousand-dollar debt hanging over his head? The mere idea was ludicrous.

He fingered the check again. Why not keep it? Why attempt the impossible? Why attempt to pay off his father's theft? Had not even Mr. Blunt called it altruism, said he was neither legally nor morally responsible? Payment in the abstract, and when one lacked the money, was all very easy, but it seemed quite different when the means came to hand. And during the past few weeks, as his interest in Miss Willoughby strengthened and deepened, thought of payment of his father's theft had become troublesome in ratio. When first contemplated, marriage had not entered into his calculations; it had appeared as an utter impossibility. And now it remained an impossibility, but in another sense, for payment of the theft even in part meant he could not

marry Nan Willoughby. He must choose between her or his sense of honor.

And, after a long struggle, Forbes decided as, perhaps, the average young man in such a position would have done. Of course, he would make restitution to the Chicago bank some time, but that time was relegated to the remote and indefinite future; for the present he would pocket the check and convert it to his own use.

This decision, after weeks of painful thought and indecision, was a relief, and, congratulating himself that he had done the sensible thing—the only thing, in fact—he determined to feel quite happy and contented. Accordingly, he dismissed the matter and settled himself with book and pipe.

Yet somehow the matter refused to be dismissed, the problem refused to be solved, and, instead of reading, he found himself turning it over and over in his mind with all the old weary repetition. He took the check from his pocketbook, where, indorsed, it had lain as his own; and quite suddenly the conviction was borne in on him with irresistible force that it was *not* his own, but belonged to the Second National Bank of Chicago. It was borne in on him with irresistible force that he must keep his pledged word to himself; keep it at all hazards.

This was the one and only solution of the problem, and deep down in his inmost consciousness he had recognized it from the first, though attempting to cloud the issue. He must keep his pledged word to himself, to his own self be true, and his love for Nan Willoughby had nothing whatever to do with the matter; it was not that he loved her less, but honor more. Yes, it was simply a question of honor; altruistic, quixotic, even ridiculous it might be, yet still to him no less a question. He must make some attempt at restitution, for his whole campaign



against Marsland and the Empire Company had been founded on such a proposition.

That twenty-thousand-dollar check was not his own to do with as he liked; from the first it had been pledged in another direction, dedicated to another purpose than the promotion of his own personal happiness. He knew also that Nan Willoughby was not the kind of girl to buy happiness at the price of principle; she was aware of the pledging of that check, she knew for what purpose it was to be used, and he could not prove false to his vow. No, there was but the one answer to the question, nor had there ever been another.

So Forbes sat down and wrote the long-deferred letter to the Second National Bank of Chicago, inclosing the indorsed check. And he knew the right answer had been given, for now peace and contentment were no longer fictitious. He had not compromised with his sense of honor, nor had victory been lightly achieved.

## CHAPTER XV.

### AFTER FIFTEEN YEARS.

The "mysterious Mr. Graves" dropped in as Forbes finished addressing and stamping the letter to his father's former employers. It was one of the occasions when "Mr. Graves" looked old as the everlasting hills rather than fresh and young as the summer morn.

"Good evening, Mr. Blunt," greeted Forbes with a smile.

"Lisping Jimmie" returned the smile as he sank into a chair. "So Miss Willoughby has exposed me?"

"How did you know? Have you seen her?"

"Not since yesterday, when I saw her talking to Bob Davis of the *Sun*. I knew, of course, he'd enlighten her, and she you. 'Purely elementary, Watson. Purely elementary.'"

"Well, I never guessed it," said Forbes. "I never happened to meet any one who knew your true rôle. Why this secrecy?"

"Well, notoriety has its drawbacks," replied Mr. Blunt dryly. "It's a nuisance, and sometimes I want to get away from the day's work if I can. Then again the average person has a natural distrust for members of my profession; the mere word 'detective' makes them shut up like clams and be anything but themselves. Sometimes, too, a man wants to be liked or hated for himself, not for what he represents. Occasionally I assume various names and live here and there in peace and seclusion until an inquisitive somebody exposes me; then I take another name and move on. A member of my profession requires a *nom de guerre* quite as much as a popular author or actor—more so, in fact; otherwise it's impossible to enjoy one's private life in decency and comfort. It's very flattering but rather embarrassing at times to find an epidemic of newsboys, district messengers, and other patrons of lurid literature forming an impromptu reception committee on the stoop or front hall. You see, among them I'm regarded as a cross between Old Sleuth, Nick Carter, and Jack Johnson, so don't blame me if occasionally I try to dodge the spotlight." The famous detective laughed and threw away his cigarette.

"Well," he added, eying the letter Forbes had finished, "I see our friends have paid up, eh?"

"Yes, we've won out; the check was waiting for me here to-night, and I'm to clear out in twenty-four hours. Of course, Mr. Blunt, none knows better than I that at least half, if not all, the spoils belong to you, but I suppose it's no use——"

"Oh, no; not the least use in the world," interrupted the other with a smile. "This is one of my cases that I've taken for—well, not for money.

It has interested me. By the way, Forbes, I suppose you could find a use for that twenty thousand, eh, if you didn't think the right thing to do was to send it to that Chicago bank? For instance, it would make a nice little balance to start housekeeping on."

Forbes colored; how accurately the other read his thoughts! "It was a great temptation," he admitted frankly, "and I almost caved in. I don't want to be tempted that way again, and, in fact, won't feel entirely safe until that letter's mailed."

Mr. Blunt nodded, picking up the letter. "I know what this decision cost you," he said, with sudden gravity and sincerity. "It *was* a great temptation, Forbes, and I'm glad you remained true to the colors hoisted by your own hand. No matter if, under the circumstances, some people, perhaps, might think it a strained sense of honor; you hoisted your colors and stuck by them to the end, and the ability to do that counts for a good deal in life; I might say it counts for everything. I've come to tell you, however, there's no longer the necessity for such a sacrifice."

Forbes paled with emotion; he could not translate his thoughts into speech. He had not permitted himself to dwell on the subject of his father's possible innocence, for it appeared so impossible. He remained staring at the other, and in silence Mr. Blunt produced the half dozen letters he had borrowed.

"I want you to look at these," he said calmly, like a professor addressing a student. "One and all contain a very simple fact which your mother and you evidently failed to observe. I happened to notice it, however, the first time I saw them. I refer to the watermark:"

"The watermark?" repeated Forbes mechanically.

"Yes. Of course, you know all note-paper bears a name or trade-mark—the watermark as it's called—but it's im-

possible to see it unless one holds the paper to the light. Now look at this."

He held one of the letters against the strong incandescent light, and, watermarked on the paper, Forbes saw for the first time the words: "Stork's Fine Linen."

"Now look at this, and this, and this," added Mr. Blunt, picking up the remaining five letters and holding them as he had done the other. "You see? Stork's Superfine. Stork's Irish Linen. Stork's Far-away Mail. Stork's Cream Wove. Stork's Old Irish Parchment. In short, though six different qualities of paper are represented here, they are one and all manufactured by Stork—a Massachusetts concern. Yet these letters are supposed to have been written in six different cities of Europe. Doesn't it seem rather strange that American note paper, and from the same firm, should have been used in each instance? Isn't it pulling the long arm of coincidence right out of the socket? It certainly struck me so, especially as I had an idea that the Stork concern had no export trade. However, to be sure, I made inquiries from the firm, and found I was right; they have no export trade and none of their paper is sold on the Continent. Therefore, this paper was bought here."

"Then—then you mean my father must have taken a stock of such paper with him?"

"No, I don't. That's possible, but not probable; very improbable, in fact. Your father is supposed to have left Chicago on a Thursday night in a great hurry and to have sailed on the *St. Paul*, leaving New York early Saturday morning. He mentions those facts, you remember, in his letter. He took no other belongings, no possessions of any kind in the way of clothes; why, then, should he lay in a stock of note paper and of half a dozen different qualities? Wouldn't that be sheer idiocy? Not, mind you, merely one box



of paper, but six different brands. Doesn't the simple little fact of those watermarks—unobserved by ninety-nine people out of a hundred—raise a series of questions that refuse to be satisfactorily answered?"

Forbes spoke with difficulty. "Are you inferring, then, that my father did not write those letters?"

"I am. Those letters, or the majority of them, I venture to say, were written here in America; they were composed and written here and mailed in the different cities whose stamps and postmarks they bear."

"But it's my father's writing!" exclaimed Forbes. "I'll swear to that! My mother could have sworn to it, too."

"Your father," replied Mr. Blunt, "wrote an extremely plain, legible hand, very easy to imitate by any one at all gifted that way. Those letters are nothing but forgeries. Monsieur Blanco, the greatest handwriting expert perhaps in the world, will tell you so. I found occasion to acquire a specimen of your father's writing, and Monsieur Blanco has compared it with these letters. I know a little about the science, but he can explain to you far better than I wherein lies all the little differences, though they are remarkably good forgeries."

Forbes sat down, the sweat pearly on his brow. "You mean, then, my father wasn't a thief? You mean he didn't commit suicide?"

"No, your mother's faith was justified. Forbes, your father was murdered——"

"M-murdered!"

"Yes, I must tell you the truth. He was killed in defense of that seventy-five-thousand dollars he has been accused of stealing. The unjust blot has stood against his name and memory for fifteen years, but at last time and events are going to do him justice. Now, before I go any farther, you must give

me your promise not to leave these rooms to-night, but to let this question rest entirely with the law, where it properly belongs. I mean the question of bringing your father's murderer to justice. Have I that promise?"

"You have, Mr. Blunt," replied Forbes, with pale, set lips.

The famous detective nodded and picked up the "suicide letter"; the last letter written supposedly by Robert Forbes in London.

"This is a masterpiece," pronounced Mr. Blunt. "They are all gems in their way, but this one especially. One can hardly believe the writer was merely faking up the emotions he so vividly depicts, writing things he did not even feel remotely. And, as in the other letters, it shows an intimate knowledge of your father's affairs. Yes, they are the work of a very clever sort of person, but even the cleverest make mistakes, and it's an axiom in our profession that every crime has its 'monument.'"

"Now, this very clever person made two mistakes, left two monuments, in the writing of these letters; the first we have seen—failing to remember that note paper is watermarked. He knew enough to get different qualities of paper—seeing they were to be mailed from different cities—but he neither saw nor thought of the watermark. Without those watermarks none could say this paper was not purchased abroad.

"The second and far more deadly monument is present in this suicide letter; here the writer's cleverness has gone a little too far and got him into serious trouble. You observe these blots caused, supposedly, by your father's tears; that was a last artistic, realistic touch which, no doubt, at the time occasioned the writer much satisfaction. Let us see, however, what this inspiration, after fifteen years, has cost him."

Mr. Blunt produced a small, powerful magnifying glass, and held it over the blots. "See anything?"

Forbes shook his head. "Just a few faint, wavy lines."

"Lisping Jimmie" then brought out a small tube filled with a fine white powder; very deftly he dusted the powder over the blots, spreading it evenly with the aid of a fine camel's hair brush. And slowly, before Forbes' eyes, the vague, wavy lines which he had seen began to assume a certain definite design, standing out white against the black.

"Now, look," said Mr. Blunt, holding the magnifying glass.

"Finger prints!" exclaimed Forbes in a low voice.

"Yes," nodded the other. "The dexter thumb and forefinger of the writer, the man responsible for your father's death."

Forbes could make no reply; he was still staring at the finger prints as if fascinated. There was something horrific about them, something uncanny about the whole performance, in fact, as if they had taken shape and form in obedience to the wave of a magician's wand. And to think those blots had been there during all the years, holding a secret which at last had been wrenched from them by advancing science.

"They aren't very good," said Mr. Blunt apologetically, "for, of course, this isn't the first time they've been subjected to such a process; they've been enlarged and photographed at headquarters. But, considering the lapse of time, they were remarkable. All the letters, however, were preserved carefully from the light, and you notice the ink hasn't faded in the least, but looks as fresh as the day it was penned. There's something rather grim and ironic in all this, for, of course, when the letters were written, the subject of finger prints wasn't uni-

versally known and hadn't become an exact science. Nowadays you'll find your criminal taking particularly good care not to leave such a deadly trademark; but at that time, if the writer was aware what he had done in making those artistic blots, there was no reason to attach any significance to it. He had no reason to suspect he was indelibly expressing his own guilt.

"Now," continued Mr. Blunt, producing a sheet of paper from his wallet, "here we have another exhibit—another dexter thumb and forefinger. Here, however, black powder has of necessity been employed instead of white. This also has been photographed at headquarters, and, unlike the others, is perfectly clear and distinct in every particular; you can mark every line in the whorls."

"Isn't this a blank page from a ledger?" asked Forbes, taking the sheet.

"Yes. You see, sometimes it's necessary to secure finger prints without a subject's knowledge, and in such cases blank paper is used. Say, for instance, I want yours; I—or, if I am known to you, one of my operatives does the trick—call in the guise of a book agent. I open and show you, say, this ledger and induce you to examine it. While doing so my hands accidentally rest on yours for a moment, pressing your fingers against the paper. Of course, no mark is left, no impression apparent, but afterward, if the thing has been done properly, a little black powder and a camel's hair brush will bring out just such clear impressions as these.

"I needn't go into the infallibility of finger prints; you know that out of countless thousands no two are alike, and that this system of identification is now recognized and employed throughout the world, you may say.

"Now let us carefully compare these two exhibits, these two prints of dexter thumb and forefinger; notwithstanding



that those on the letter are far from being perfect I think that, even to an inexperienced eye, the similarity of the whorls will be apparent. Here, take the glass."

Forbes, in a high state of excitement, obeyed.

"Yes, I see. I see!" he exclaimed at length. "They *are* alike. Whose—whose are these?" placing a trembling finger on the ledger leaf. "Whose are they?"

Mr. Blunt eyed him long and steadily. "Haven't you an idea, Forbes?"

"No! No! How could I? Why should I? Whose are they? Tell me!"

"John Marsland's!"

## CHAPTER XVI.

### THE STAGE IS SET FOR A VISITOR.

Forbes dropped the glass with a crash, pushed away the paper as if he had touched a snake, and cowered back in his chair, white and shaking.

"Marsland's!" he cried hoarsely. He covered his eyes with palsied hands, as if to shut out his own thoughts.

"They are Marsland's," repeated Mr. Blunt with set lips. "That's as true as you sit in that chair. Don't you see now why he hated you? *This* was the irreparable wrong done——" He was interrupted by the violent ringing of the desk telephone, the sanctity of which, while demolishing the building, had been another of the Empire Company's vexatious problems.

Forbes roused himself with an effort, and picked up the receiver.

"That may be for me," said Mr. Blunt. "I told them I was coming here, and left the number."

"It is for you," replied Forbes, passing over the instrument. "Gentleman by the name of Smith."

"One of my operatives," nodded the detective.

He listened at the instrument with-

out comment, and rang off with a curt "All right."

"Marsland will be here in about fifteen minutes, Forbes."

"Will he?" exclaimed the latter hoarsely. "Then he comes at his own risk!"

"There will be no risk, Forbes. Remember your promise."

"I'm not going to him; he's coming to me. That wasn't in the promise!"

"Your promise was to let the law take its course," replied Mr. Blunt firmly. "I didn't know Marsland was coming here to-night; though, at that, I thought it not unlikely. He's been 'tailed' for the past week, and Mr. Smith, one of my operatives assigned to shadowing him, heard him give this address to the chauffeur of a taxi. That's why he called me up."

"And—and do you expect me to see him after *this*!" exclaimed Forbes, pointing to the finger prints. "Do you expect me to see him as if nothing had happened? You say he killed my father; then, if so, he's a double murderer, for he also killed the sister I never saw, that never lived! He ruined my mother's life! He—he——"

"Sit down," said Mr. Blunt, "and pull yourself together. I know all you must feel, but you've got to play a man's part, not a child's, and I know you'll do so. There's no occasion for taking the law into your own hands. If I can't rely on you absolutely to keep control of yourself I'll meet Marsland outside. He'll be tailed here by Smith."

"You're right," replied Forbes in a low voice. "I promise to keep myself in hand. Why is Marsland coming here?"

"I don't know, but I imagine it's for one of two reasons: to put you out of the way or to make confession—I can't say which. In either case we'll be dealing with a desperate man. Marsland, I should judge, is on the

verge of madness; if not actually insane, then he's mighty near it. There's been a great change in him; you noticed it, I suppose?"

Forbes nodded. He remembered the nervous hands, twitching mouth, and the occasional glare of the eyes; also Marsland's expression at his parting words: "Don't push me too far."

"Marsland's condition has been attributed to overwork," pursued Blunt, "but it's nothing but the working of fear and conscience, and it began when he learned that night from Bergstrom your name was Forbes, not Hastings; that you were the son of his victim. For fifteen years he had managed to forget, but now the crime suddenly rose up to confront him, as it were. The knowledge that you were the son of Robert Forbes must have been absolutely paralyzing."

Forbes nodded again, remembering how Marsland had acted on that occasion. Small wonder Bergstrom had been permitted to run on as he pleased, for Marsland had been absolutely incapable of thought or action.

"To Marsland," continued Blunt, "you became, unconsciously, a sort of Nemesis; he got rid of you in one direction only to have you crop up in another; you kept crossing him at every turn. You were right; he wanted to drive you out of the city, out of the country, if possible; out of his life and thoughts. He wanted to forget, but you wouldn't let him. He has tried to find forgetfulness in drugs and dissipation, with the result that he has become a wreck. This holdup was the last straw, and it has cost him his position with the Empire Company."

"What?"

"Yes, I understand he has resigned."

Forbes was silent a moment, then said: "Do you think he has any idea that you know all this? I mean about my father."

"That I don't know. But Marsland

knows me, and he knows also that you and I are intimate—you remember he met me the other day as I was coming in here. He also knows—and has for a month past—that the remains of his victim have been discovered at last."

Forbes made an incoherent exclamation.

"In Chicago," said Blunt. "Do you remember the account in the papers? They were unearthed in the cellar of a Chicago house."

Forbes sat, white and motionless, feeling almost physically nauseated. Did he remember? There arose before his mind's eye the scene in the train, Bergstrom holding out the evening paper, the flat, white dimple on his nose, and asking if he had seen the sensational news. Bergstrom had merely used it as a method of introducing Chicago as a subject of conversation; he had his own ends to serve, and had not the remotest idea that the gruesome discovery was the remains of that Robert Forbes whom he had known, whose theft from the bank he had ever reason to credit, whose disgrace he intended bringing home on the head of the son. And he, Forbes, had dismissed the article at a glance, little suspecting the awful submerged interest it held for him, little thinking he was reading about his own father. The truth was staggering, appalling.

"After the first discovery the case has been kept pretty well out of the papers," said Blunt, "for we didn't want a premature disclosure of our suspicions. We've been busy tracing the various owners of the Chicago house——"

He was interrupted by a peremptory ring at the hall door.

Forbes arose, pale and determined. "It's all right," he said, interpreting the other's look. "I won't lose my head; you may depend on me. If that's Marsland, shall I show him in here?"



"Yes. Try and act natural. I don't know what's up, but we may as well be prepared for the worst." And Mr. Blunt deftly transferred an automatic pistol from his hip pocket to the right-hand pocket of his coat.

"Watch him sharp, Forbes, and jockey him into walking ahead of you up the hall; don't let him get behind you for a moment. This is forcing our hand a bit, but we may as well come to a show-down right now. I don't want him to know I'm here until he enters the room."

Forbes nodded. "What about these?" he asked hurriedly, pointing to the letters and loose-ledger leaf on the desk.

"Let them stay where they are," replied Blunt. "Now, then, take your pipe and a book, and don't show what you feel. I'll be watching through the crack of this door in case he should start something right off. He won't, though."

So Forbes, pipe in mouth and book in hand, strolled down the hall as the bell rang for the third time. With an admirable assumption of indifference he opened the door and confronted John Marsland.

Though his nerves were well under control, Forbes could hardly repress an exclamation, for Marsland's appearance was positively awesome; the face, fat and puffy, had a sort of greenish pallor, the bloodless lips were set in a hard, rigid line, and the pupils of the congested eyes were so enormously enlarged as to fill the iris. He spoke thickly and with evident difficulty.

"Good evening, Mr. Forbes."

"Good evening, sir."

"May I see you a moment?"

Forbes nodded, stepping aside and closing the door as the other entered. "Straight ahead, Mr. Marsland. In the library, if you please, at the end of the hall." He remained in the rear, forcing the other to precede him; and he noticed that Marsland walked stoop-

shouldered and slowly, like an old, old man.

Mr. Blunt, both hands thrust carelessly into his coat pockets, stood leaning against the mantelpiece when Marsland entered the room; their eyes met for a long moment, while a tense, perfect silence reigned. Then Marsland, with a twisted sort of smile and a little shrug, turned away.

"I didn't know you'd company, Mr. Forbes," he said calmly, "but perhaps it's just as well. Yes, just as well."

He was now standing by the desk, and his roving eyes fell on the letters and the loose-ledger leaf, so apparent even to the casual glance; a tremor seemed to shoot through him and the pupils of his eyes dilated, if possible, farther. Slowly, as if yielding to a horrible fascination, a superior will power, he put forth a trembling hand and picked up the "suicide" letter; then in the same slow, numb manner he lifted the ledger leaf with its staring black finger prints. After a long, silent contemplation he lifted his hunted eyes, turning them from Blunt to Forbes and back again; his lips moved, but no sound issued forth.

Blunt was watching him, as a hawk watches the struggles of a field rat.

"I think, Mr. Marsland," he said matter-of-factly at length, "you've seen that ledger leaf before. You may remember an agent showing you some samples the other day. It's all of fifteen years, however, since you made those other finger prints. Those artistic blots proved rather an unfortunate inspiration, for you left, at the same time, the print of your dexter thumb and forefinger. You can see that for yourself. There's the magnifying glass if you wish to compare the two; headquarters, however, is quite satisfied that the one person made both."

The greenish pallor changed to a mottled gray as Marsland replaced the papers on the desk; he made a weary

gesture of resignation and dropped into a chair.

"All very clever of you, Mr. Blunt, I'll admit," he said, with an effort, "but quite unnecessary. Quite unnecessary. You needn't put me through any third degree, any of your stage tricks; I'm all in, and I know it. I know as well as you that I've been shadowed for the past week. I suspected you were on the scent and might get me in the long run, for you're a capable bloodhound, Mr. Blunt; very capable, I'm sure. Still, I might have given you a lot of trouble; proving your case wouldn't have been easy. But what's the use? I can't stand it any longer, and I came here to-night to confess to Mr. Forbes, though, I suppose," glancing at the letters, "you've saved me that trouble."

Blunt nodded; the "bloodhound" expression had left his face, and with it the attitude of tense expectancy; he removed his hands from his pockets, and sat down. "Yes," he said gravely, "I've saved you that trouble, Mr. Marsland."

Marsland made another weary gesture. He spoke with increasing difficulty. "The game's up and my race is about run. I've got something the matter with me that nothing can cure—never mind what it is. It's occurred to me I should make whatever reparation possible, and so I've written the Chicago Second National, telling them the truth about Robert Forbes. It'll be in all the papers to-morrow, I suppose. I wish I could have kept this from my daughter——" His voice faltered a moment, then grew stronger. "That's impossible, however, if justice is to be done. She'll live to curse my name; but of course that's part of the punishment; I'm not kicking and am ready to take my medicine, every drop of it.

"Another thing, Forbes, before I go on. That twenty-thousand-dollar check

you got is from me personally; not a cent of it's Muller's. It represents my total interest in the Empire Company. There's no reason why Sol Muller should suffer for my misdeeds. For you were right; I knew the Sterling Company must be more or less of a swindle and had met Hammersly years ago. He offered me twenty-five per cent of whatever I could induce you, or any other greenhorn, to invest; I needed the money and thought you were rich enough not to mind if you ever found out. Besides, I'd then be your father-in-law and you couldn't very well do anything. You fooled me completely about your financial standing, and, perhaps, quite unintentionally, I'll admit. At all events, I needed a rich son-in-law, and of course when I discovered your poverty and true identity the connection became impossible.

"Now I'll tell you about your father if you care to listen; I must get it off my mind, tell it to somebody. I needn't go into any other part of my past, for I dare say Mr. Blunt can oblige you with all details."

Marsland straightened up with an effort, biting his bloodless lips. "Don't interrupt, please, for I find difficulty in talking."

## CHAPTER XVII.

### JOHN MARSLAND'S STATEMENT.

"To begin with," said Marsland, "fifteen years ago I lived in Chicago, was a depositor in the Second National, and therefore knew Robert Forbes; not intimately, you understand, but enough to know where he lived and to gather something about his private life. For instance, I knew he was married, had one child, and was expecting another. I lived in the same neighborhood, if not the same street, and all this I didn't necessarily learn from Forbes himself. His wife didn't know me—though I



knew her by sight—and I never went out with Forbes anywhere. We were simply friendly business acquaintances.

"Well, a day came when I needed money badly; I needn't go into the why and wherefore of it. Enough that I needed money, and for some time had been thinking how I could best help myself to some of the bank's funds. Being a depositor and friendly with Forbes I was familiar with the bank and all pertaining to it; for instance, I knew on what days it had the heaviest deposits, where the wires of the burglar alarms were situated, when the night watchman made his rounds, his habits and peculiarities; for instance, I knew he was an old man and could neither hear nor see too well. I made it my business to find out all this without arousing suspicion. And in those days, I might add, the Second National wasn't the great institution it now is."

"On the night in question, I met Forbes, apparently by accident, on his way home from the bank. I knew the nights when he worked late and that he carried the keys of the place. Also that generally he passed through my street on his way to and from the subway station.

"Well, this night I was waiting for him. Making the excuse that I wanted to speak about the renewal of a note soon due, I asked him to step into my house for a moment; always obliging and friendly, he consented readily. It was dark, late, and no one saw him enter—or, at least, they failed to recognize him." Marsland paused and wiped the sweat from his pallid face.

"I was a desperate man, but God knows I didn't mean murder," he continued in a low voice. "My idea was to force the combination from Forbes, tie him up, rob the bank, and skip to a place where they couldn't extradite me. I lived alone. My wife was dead, and my daughter, then five years old, was staying with her aunt in New

York. There were no servants in the house, and I was absolutely alone with Forbes." Marsland was speaking slower and slower, pausing between each word.

"I'll save you and myself the details; enough that Forbes proved far more stubborn than I'd expected, refusing to reveal the combination. I was in for it now; I couldn't go back, had exposed my hand, and must see the thing through at all costs. I was desperate, and my temper, never very good, was aroused. I tried harsher methods, and I wrung the secret from him at last, but—but he died on my hands——"

"You fiend! You tortured him to death!" The cry was wrung from young Forbes as he sprang at the other with distorted features and clenched hands.

Blunt stuck out an iron arm, and barred the boy's way. Marsland had not flinched; he sat with closed eyes and bowed head.

"Don't think I'm finding any pleasure in this recital," he said in a monotone. "I'd have passed over that part, if possible, and I haven't enlarged on it. Let me finish; there isn't much more to tell."

Young Forbes mastered his emotion with an effort, and, fumbling for a chair, sat down in a dazed manner.

"After the—the accident," pursued Marsland, "I realized I was in for it unless I used my wits. I sat down, thought the whole situation over carefully, and slowly the plan I eventually followed occurred to me. It was my one chance, and I took it.

"Robbing the bank had now become more imperative than ever, and I proceeded to dress myself in Forbes' clothes and to make myself resemble him as much as possible. At that time we were much of a size, both of us fair-haired and clean shaven. I realized that boldness was the best policy. I possessed the keys and combination,

knew the plan of the bank thoroughly, and determined to walk right in, take my chance on not meeting the watchman, or, in the subdued light, my chance of pretending I was Forbes. His presence would arouse no suspicion, and I could say I had returned to place some valuable papers in the vault or had forgotten something. I relied on the watchman's age, my knowledge of his impaired sight and hearing, to see me through if we met and my knowledge of his habits to obviate such a meeting.

"Accordingly, I locked up the house and went boldly to the bank, waiting until I knew the watchman would be making his rounds in a distant part of the building. I was wearing Forbes' light gray ulster and gray slouch hat, and, passing the corner policeman, he greeted me as Forbes. This was a good augury, and I boldly entered the bank. It was now almost midnight.

"The rest proved ridiculously easy; in those days the Second National had no time lock on its safe, and, possessing the combination, I opened it without trouble, helped myself to all the available paper currency, and packed it in a satchel taken from under Forbes' window. I didn't meet the watchman until about to leave; he appeared in the lower hall as I was about to lock the outer doors. Speaking as much like Forbes as I knew how, I greeted him by name and he replied in kind, plainly thinking me the cashier. I returned to the house satisfied that the first part of my difficult program had been a pronounced success. It gave me renewed confidence and courage.

"For the next forty-eight hours I was busily engaged in removing all traces of my crime and in making preparations for a trip abroad. I saw the agents of the house and took a five years' lease in order to obviate discovery of its secret. I also employed part of my time in composing and writing those letters," his somber eyes turn-

ing to the ones on the desk. "They weren't thought out in a minute, and I wished to get the whole thing off my mind as soon as possible. I took the precaution of writing them on different brands of paper. Forbes' wallet contained specimens of his penmanship and also information which gave me a more complete knowledge of his private life—personal letters and such. His writing was easy to imitate, and you know," turning to Mr. Blunt with a grim smile, "I've always been rather gifted that way.

"The rest you know; I locked up the house, sailed for Europe, remained there six months or so, and mailed the letters from different cities.

"On my return I lived at the Chicago address for a few years, then sublet the place until my lease ran out, and moved to New York with my daughter and her aunt. That seventy-five thousand had given me a fresh start, and, eventually, enabled me to buy an interest in the Empire Company.

"The mistake of leaving my finger prints I was quite unaware of until to-night. As for the discovery in the cellar of the Chicago house, that was an accident I could not foresee. It wouldn't have been unearthed for perhaps fifty years or more if the Chicago subway people hadn't pitched on that particular site for their new loop and station; otherwise the house wouldn't have been demolished." Marsland's voice had sunk to a hardly perceptible whisper.

"That's all," he said. "Now let the law take its course. I am waiting." A spasm passed over his face, his eyes closed, and with a sigh he fell back, breathing heavily and with every muscle relaxed. In another moment he had lost consciousness.

"Call the nearest doctor," said Blunt in a low voice, bending over the prostrate man. "You know the neighbor-



hood better than I. But I'm afraid it's no use. He's poisoned himself—atropine, maybe. He must have taken a dose before coming here. Well, perhaps it's best, after all."

A few hours later John Marsland died without regaining consciousness. He had made his last earthly statement.

Later, James Blunt, in reply to Forbes' question, gave his side of the strange and sensational case.

"At the time of advocating the 'holdup' I was by no means sure of John Marsland's guilt; I mean in reference to your father," he said. "The Chicago house had changed tenants so frequently during the past fifteen years that it took time and trouble to establish the fact that the Marsland who had occupied it at the time of your father's supposed theft was *this* John Marsland.

"My acquaintance with him began twenty years ago, when he was arrested in Indianapolis for forgery; I was instrumental in bringing it home to him, but through a technicality he succeeded in beating the case. Thus he had reason to know me and I him. His early life had been none too good, his wife had separated from him before she died, and that was the reason—at the time of the Second National Bank affair—his child was living in New York with her aunt. I suppose, after his sudden affluence and a promise to turn over a new leaf, they got together again. However, after the forgery business in Indianapolis, Marsland managed to keep within the law, and I lost track of him until finding him the president-manager of the Empire Company.

"Perhaps what first set me thinking about him in connection with your father was his hatred for you; it was entirely unreasonable to suppose that a man of his evident standing and position would take such measures, go to such extremes simply because you had

accused his daughter and himself of deceit and hypocrisy. Even his part in the Sterling Mines Company swindle could not explain it. It struck me there must be another and infinitely greater reason, and when I learned that a John Marsland had occupied the Chicago house fifteen years ago, and had been a depositor in the Second National, it set me thinking all the harder.

"When at length we succeeded in proving beyond doubt that the president of the Empire Company had been a tenant of the Chicago house at the time of Forbes' supposed theft and disappearance, I felt I'd hit on the right track, more especially when, on digging into Marsland's past, I discovered he'd gone to Europe for six months immediately after the robbery. I knew, of course, his ability with the pen, and that the forging of such a hand as your father's would be quite in Marsland's line and simplicity itself. What I learned from the letters, you know.

"There is no doubt," concluded Mr. Blunt, "that Marsland, as he claimed, could have given us a lot of trouble if he'd engaged a sharp lawyer and fought the case to the bitter end. I doubt if we could have hung it on him, even though proving him the author of those letters; for it's quite impossible to prove the remains those of Robert Forbes. Of course we know they are, but the law demands conclusive proof. Lacking that identification the case would fall to pieces, I think, for we could not show a motive. That's why no steps were taken for Marsland's arrest. I knew he was losing his nerve under the strain, and I wanted to give him enough rope to hang himself. I counted on a voluntary confession or on forcing one from him by springing these finger prints—'stage tricks' as he called it."

It was characteristic of Forbes that, forgetting for the moment his own

great happiness, his thoughts should turn to the innocent ones who were left behind to bear the brunt of Marsland's guilt.

"This will be awful for Miss Marsland!" he exclaimed. "What can be done, Blunt? Can't we keep it from her? Keep it out of the papers?"

The other shook his head. "How? Your father's memory can only be vindicated through publicity. Anyway, I believe Marsland spoke the truth when he said he'd written all the facts to the Chicago bank. And you simply can't keep such a thing quiet; the facts are bound to come out. I know how you feel, but that's the worst of such cases—that the innocent must suffer for the guilty. There's no way out,

Forbes; it will be on the first page of every morning paper."

The former Dorothy Marsland is now Mrs. Adolph Bergstrom, being married the day Forbes and his wife, née Willoughby, returned from their honeymoon. For Mr. Morris Levy, on reading the sensational news pertaining to his defunct, prospective father-in-law, broke the engagement in the prompt and cold-blooded manner of which Dorothy herself had once been guilty; thus at last Bergstrom's patience and fidelity were rewarded. They say he has not repented of the step, and those who knew his wife in the old days observe that she has changed greatly for the better.

*"The Red Beach," a book-length novel by Frederick R. Bechdolt, a story of Alaska, will appear complete in the July month-end POPULAR, on sale two weeks hence, June 23rd.*



## FIRST AID TO THE JOB SEEKER

HE had a keen eye, and, from the neck up, he looked like a brilliant, successful young man. A survey of him from his chin down disclosed the fact that he wore a shiny evening suit a size too small for him, that he had a telltale sinking-in somewhere in the immediate vicinity of his wishbone, and that the tops of his shoes were in far better condition than the soles. Altogether, he was on his uppers—a fact which he was confiding to his friend in the hotel lobby.

After a while, there appeared in the distance the picture of unlimited wealth, unsullied success, and uninterrupted prosperity. Instead of a sinking-in at the wishbone, he exhibited a Dutch-window effect. His clothes fitted him to perfection. Evidently he had come out a victor in every battle he had fought against adversity.

As soon as he appeared, the young man in the small evening clothes was electrified into new life.

"Excuse me," he said to his friend. "That old duffer is from Wisconsin, and he wants to get an ambassadorship. I'm helping him to get it."

All of which is another indication that strangers looking for honors in Washington will pay large sums of money to any needy person who claims to have influence with Bill Jones, who says he has influence with Congressman Smith, who is known to have influence with Senator Jones, who must have influence with a cabinet officer, who has more influence than anybody else with the president.

It's a fine old graft.



# The Terrible Freshman

By Holworthy Hall

*Author of "Pepper," "Reverse English," Etc.*

Pepper McHenry takes a long chance to save the fair name of Harvard from the Terrible Freshman—an undersized, anaemic youth with a penchant for clothes and haberdashery a few months ahead of the Broadway fashions, and possessed of about as much moral fiber as a mud turtle

INSTINCTIVELY they called him "The Terrible Freshman," but in the same spirit of paradox with which they might have bestowed the name of "Fido" upon a pet elephant. He was an undersized, anaemic youth, with a penchant for clothes and haberdashery a few months ahead of the Broadway fashions, and he thought it denoted a maturity and worldly experience to profess that he never felt capable of undertaking breakfast until after the fifth cigarette.

He possessed about as much moral fiber as a mud turtle, but he had an allowance which was sinfully large; for his father, having led a most secluded and repressed boyhood, was rather pleased at the notion of entertaining a sport in the family. He sent Tommy Foster to Cambridge in the confident expectation of making a gentleman of him; and Tommy, discovering that no one was particularly interested in what he did or how he did it, took advantage of the opportunity to go to the devil as fast as he conveniently could.

Tommy engaged a room which happened to be on the same floor with Pepper McHenry and Monk Spinden, and after he had chastely decorated it with a class banner, a dozen assorted steins, and a set of art prints which would have astonished his fond parents, he put on a new suit of the musical-comedy variety, a vivid silk shirt, and

an equally uproarious tie, and started out to make some friends who could show him a touch of high life in greater Boston. He found McHenry's door on the latch, delivered a sounding thump on one of the upper panels, and went in.

Now, there were certain times at which McHenry was essentially serious, and one of them was when he chanced to be occupied, in concocting a humorous editorial for the *Lampoon*. When, therefore, he looked up from his inky labors to behold the Terrible Freshman standing nonchalantly by his center table, grinning cheerfully around the cigarette which he had carefully pasted to his upper lip, McHenry didn't display the enthusiasm of a commoner in the presence of royalty. He didn't—as Tommy had anticipated—leap to his feet, grasp the newcomer by the hand, and ask him as a special favor *please* to reveal the secret of who built his clothes. He didn't swing wide the doors of a cellaret and offer Scotch hospitality with seltzer on the side. He didn't even seem impressed by the silk shirt.

"Hello," said Tommy. "My name's Foster—I'm a freshman. Say, this is a nice room, isn't it? What are all those medals strung around your pictures, anyway? Can't we go out and get a high ball somewhere?"

McHenry wheeled in his desk chair and regarded the freshman with uncon-

cealed amazement. Before he could phrase a suitable response, Monk Spinden burst in, and halted at sight of the simple pattern of black-and-white checks which adorned the person of young Mr. Foster.

"Oh—hello!" Tommy greeted him. "Put her there, old top!" He offered a flabby hand, and Spinden was so dazed that he accepted it. "I've seen you in the hall. My name's Foster; I'm a freshman."

"I wouldn't have known it," Spinden told him, gradually regaining his senses.

"Now, don't kid *me*," laughed Tommy, sinking into the cushions of McHenry's window seat. "Look here. I don't know anybody in this dump. Why don't you two be good fellows, and come in town with me to-night? It's on me. I've got a wad big enough to choke a horse. I want to speed it up, and make some friends."

"Don't worry," said McHenry dryly. "A man with manners like yours——"

"Well, are you on?"

Together they shook their heads decisively.

"Out of the question, Mr. Foster."

"Can't be done," asserted Spinden.

"Well—then I'll have to scout around and find somebody else. Say, is there a bartender in Boston who knows how to mix a silver fizz? I had one yesterday that ruined me. You fellows will have to give me pointers until I learn the ropes." He rose and inspected McHenry's choicest shingle. "Is that a good club?" he inquired. "I'll have to let you put me up for it, if it is. Well—don't forget to drop in and see me. I'm in forty-one. You're McHenry, I know. But what's *your* name?"

"Spinden," said Monk shortly.

"Oh, *sure!* I've heard about you! Well, don't forget to look me up. You play poker, of course? We'll get up a good game any night you say. So long!"

He departed; and Spinden, leaning against the mantel, began to smile. McHenry snorted and turned back to his editorial.

"Nice little fellow," observed Monk mildly. "How'd you like to have him in your Sunday-school class? Gad! I don't see what people are thinking about to send a half-baked potato like that to a place like this! You're a fearful snob, Pepper. Why wouldn't you go on his party?"

McHenry laid down his pen and contemplated his friend soberly.

"Monk," he said, "there's a lad who's going to raise particular Cain around this place—as long as he stays here, and the indications are that it won't be so long at that! What bothers me is that there are plenty of men who'll *let* him spend his money. Did you get the noble brow of him? Regular dent, wasn't it? And then he'll go whooping around town, and people who are always looking for a chance to take a crack at this place will sneer and say he's a *Harvard man!* I'm darned near ready to go out and yell for eugenics this minute!"

"*We* don't have to look out for him——"

"No," agreed Pepper gravely, "but I can tell you this much: if some of those sanctimonious guys who hang around Brooks House would quit rooting quite so hard for their own precious little hobbies and go after a mutt like our friend Foster—and try to bang some sense into his silly head—I think it would be a lot better for the university in the long run."

"Sort of moral-uplift bureau for fool freshmen?" queried Spinden humorously.

"That's it exactly!" He got up and set about filling a calabash. "I tell you, Monk, when I see an animal like that let loose in Cambridge, it gives me the creeps! I wonder what we ought to do about it. Here's a freshman who's



absolutely sure to make a horrible mess of the whole thing. It's a safe bet he'll be fired inside of six months unless somebody gets after him with a club. Goodness knows I'm no reformer, and you know perfectly well I don't yearn to associate with any fresh little tailor's dummy like this one. But *do* we want to let him go out and advertise this place? Because when you come right down to it, after he's passed his exams and paid the bursar's fee, he's as much a Harvard man as the rest of us."

"What are you going to do about it?" demanded the practical Spinden.

"*Do?*" He lighted the pipe. "I don't know."

"You weren't thinking of playing nurse, were you?"

"Might," said McHenry. "You never can tell."

Spinden smiled appreciatively.

"The idea of you guiding a freshman into the paths of rectitude is a new one——"

"Get it straight," warned Pepper. "Don't misunderstand me, Monk! I'm not going to take up any valuable time preaching to this young genius. It wouldn't work. Besides, we don't know yet that he's what you'd call wild. I'm only assuming that he is because of the way he talked. But simply for the sake of common decency, when I see a lad so hopelessly out of his element as Foster is in Cambridge, if I can do anything *practical* for him, by gosh! I'm going to do it, whether I like it or not, or whether *he* likes it or not!"

"Now you've got that out of your system," said Spinden, "I came in to see if you'd care to take in a little theater party to-night, with much refreshment afterward. Only, if you're so blamed virtuous all of a sudden——"

McHenry reached for his hat.

"*That's* all right," he explained easily. "The point is that you've got to make a fool of yourself in a dignified and proper manner, that's all!"

Yet the practical application of McHenry's principles came sooner than either of them had expected. On their return from town that night they found the Terrible Freshman, accompanied by three men who had apparently been willing to cement friendship with him at his expense, wandering down the middle of Mt. Auburn Street, singing in execrable close harmony the pathetic ditty entitled, "We're Here Because We're Here."

"It's up to us," said McHenry excitedly. "Those crazy idiots! Why, they'd be canned in a second—*come on!*"

Accordingly, they cut the Terrible Freshman neatly out of the procession, and, after explaining to the other men just what they thought of them, they half led, half carried Tommy Foster to No. 41, where they put him to bed in the room with the big crimson banner and the many art prints.

And that was the beginning of their guardianship.

## II.

It was, to say the least, a novel experience for McHenry, and he didn't pretend to explain it, even to himself. If Tommy Foster had been a friend of any of his own friends, or if the office had suggested that he keep an eye on the freshman, or even if the proctor had asked for advice in the management of a difficult situation, the thing would have been normal and logical.

As a matter of fact, Pepper detested the loose-lipped youth. He couldn't endure to converse with him for ten minutes at a stretch. Yet night after night, when he heard the voice of the Terrible Freshman on the stairs, and sensed the quality of his incoherence, he dropped his work and hurried out to cry "*Shut up!*" in a peremptory whisper, and to escort his charge past the proctor's study to the comparative

security of forty-one. Once or twice he tried to reason with the man, but Tommy laughed in his face and wanted to know when he planned to matriculate at the divinity school.

With Spinden it was different, for the Terrible Freshman was rather in awe of the man who already had two H's to his credit, and got his photographs in the daily papers.

Spinden developed the disconcerting habit of dropping into Foster's room just when the clans were gathering, and, after narrating the convivial exploits of an entirely mythical crowd from the year before, remarking complacently that they had all been fired out of college and disowned by their families. His recitations proved such a wet blanket upon the fire of youth that Tommy and his friends took to playing poker somewhere else, but Spinden was optimistic enough to believe that they didn't play as often.

"Of course, the miserable little pup isn't studying at all," complained McHenry one evening in November. "I don't understand how in thunder he ever slid through the hour exams—he's on prob without any question—and the next thing is to see what he does at mid-years."

"Pepper," said Spinden, "how much longer are we going to keep up this giddy farce? What good does it do? Why should *we* bother our heads about it any longer? I'm through! You know what he's up to now?"

McHenry nodded.

"Stage-door effect," he admitted. "Yes—but—well, I'll tell you, Monk. You've heard me speak of my brother, haven't you? He's seven or eight years older than I am. Well, he came here, too, and he wasn't as rough as Tommy is, but he was a pretty live wire while he lasted. I don't mean he drank a lot, or anything like that, but he made a lot of noise around college, and flubbed along in his courses, and got

dropped in sophomore year. And I can remember pretty clearly just how the family felt about it. It's just here: I don't give a rap for Tommy Foster one way or the other, but I've got a pretty good hunch that his family thinks he's a little tin god on wheels, and doesn't know the way he's acting. And I can imagine how they'd feel if he got thrown out—not for flunking, you know, but for conduct. That's about all."

"He told me himself," said Spinden, "his family lets him have anything he wants. They think he's a wonder. They haven't the least idea that he even smokes—and he said his dad would murder him if he knew how he sops up high balls. They think he's sporty about clothes and society and all that sort of rot, but they don't know the rest of it."

"And that's just the reason," said McHenry, "that I want him to be fired at mid-years—for *poor scholarship!*"

"What's that?"

"Yes—he's sure to be fired sooner or later, anyway, but what I'm afraid of is that the dean or somebody will get hold of his stunts in town, and fire him for some of the other things. Do you see the point?"

"In a way," conceded Spinden. "But—you know a lot of people are watching him, Pepper. The proctor's getting mighty suspicious these days. I don't think he can hang around stage doors much longer without getting caught. That's a fact!"

"Then," announced McHenry firmly, "we'll have to take action, Monk. The Terrible Freshman will have to flunk out at mid-years and save his reputation!"

"Pepper," said Spinden, "I wish that sometimes—not always, but just once in a while—I could make you out!"

"Good Lord!" flashed McHenry. "Good Lord, Monk! You don't suppose the mere fact that I'm on the



*Lampoon prevents me from being human, do you?"*

### III.

The Terrible Freshman had already gone from bad to worse, and it was evident that he was approaching the superlative. Now and then his self-appointed guardians saw him in town, where he apparently had not the common sense to refrain from dining at popular hotels and restaurants with "beauties" from the first row of the chorus. He came back to the dormitory so late now that McHenry was generally asleep; on one occasion the proctor wasn't, so that on the following morning Tommy was summoned to the dread office and given the final warning.

For a day or two his repentance was voluble; he wept on McHenry's rug, and alleged that if his father knew what was going on, he'd put him to work in the underwear factory at four dollars a week, and rewrite his will. He swore that he intended to cut out *everything*, even to cigarettes; on the strength of his statements, he borrowed twenty dollars from McHenry, and gave a farewell celebration at the Bova which became a classic and a marvel to succeeding generations that so much hilarity could be induced at so slight an expenditure.

There followed rumors of a prodigious session at cards which endured from late Saturday night to early Monday morning; and of an escapade in town which caused even the freshman's associates to shake their heads in horror at his daring. The climax came when Tommy Foster disappeared entirely from Cambridge for two days.

Pepper McHenry was laboring diligently at the biography of the immortal Samuel Johnson, when far down the corridor he heard Monk Spinden's voice shouting: "Pep! Oh—*Pep!*" It took McHenry one jump to disintegrate

himself from the mass of collateral reading, and he went down the long hallway at a speed which would have done credit to a member of the track squad.

Foster's door was ajar, and from within came the sound of a mighty scuffle, mingled with slow exhalations from Spinden and a great deal of profanity on the part of Tommy Foster. Pepper stepped inside and slammed the door, just as his friend succeeded in pinning the Terrible Freshman to the divan and sitting on him.

"Look at that!" gasped Monk, indicating a slip of paper on the freshman's desk. "I caught him—when he was packing a suit case! Stop that, Tommy, or I'll *swat* you!"

"You—you coward!" wailed the boy. "You big stiff! Let me up! *Let me up!* Don't you read that, McHenry!"

Pepper, completely at a loss to comprehend the unequal combat, picked up the slip of paper and glanced curiously at it. Then he sat down very suddenly, and whistled.

"Why——" he said uncertainly. "Why—it's a—a license!"

"You let me go!"

"Monk—is he sober?"

"Partly," said Spinden, with immense contempt. "That is, I don't think he's had anything to drink, but he's plain crazy!"

The freshman abruptly covered his face, and began to sob brokenly. McHenry looked at him, while a dozen conflicting expressions chased themselves over his unlovely features.

"Well, this *is* a mess! What's it about, Monk?"

"Search *me*."

"It's none of our business, of course—it's none of our business—but, Monk, we *can't* let him go ahead."

"You try to stop me!"

"But what *can* we do?"

"For the love of Mike," retorted Spinden, "why do you think I yelled

for you to come in here? You've got to think what we *can* do!"

McHenry, more shaken than Spinden had ever seen him, folded the paper carefully, and put it in an inside pocket. He went over and touched Tommy Foster on the shoulder.

"Look here, Tom," he said. "This—this won't do, you know. We're going to stop it. Not for you, you understand—we're all through with *you*—but for the people back home. It doesn't make any difference what you think about it. You can call us anything you like; only if you do, somebody in this room is going to get spanked! You're going to camp right here with Monk while I go in and try to straighten things out for you, and then you're going to write a letter to your father saying the work's too hard for you, and you're going to quit and come home. We're going to save you the trouble of being expelled from college; and after you've written the letter and *I've* mailed it, and after we've put you on a train, then you can go and get another license if you have the nerve. We won't see you expelled—we won't subject the university to the disgrace of having to admit that you've ever been registered here. But you've got to quit! Do you get that?"

He made no answer.

"You can keep him here until I get back, can't you, Monk?"

"You bet I can," said Spinden grimly. "Where are you going?"

"In town. Do you know what this girl's real name—I mean her stage name is?"

"No—and *he* won't tell us. Only, it's a safe bet she's at the Metropolitan. That's where he's been hanging around for the last couple of months."

"All right. I'll fix it up somehow."

"Pepper! What in thunder can you do?"

McHenry paused on the threshold—

and you never would have believed that his was the fame of a funny man.

"I don't know," he admitted. "But I'm going to do *something*!"

#### IV.

As McHenry, dripping from the cold December rain, waited in the vestibule of the dingy boarding house, he realized that his quest had been much less difficult than he had assumed. A taxicab had taken him to the theater, where a vitriolic doorkeeper had insulted him, accepted a dollar bill, fawned upon him, and hunted up the address he demanded. In less than an hour from the time he left Harvard Square, McHenry was bidden to ascend the stairs of the boarding house, and obediently knocked at a cracked portal on the top floor. A feminine voice said: "Let her come!" and he entered.

It was a depressingly bare little room, furnished only with a small iron bed, a rickety chest of drawers, and a battered wardrobe. A trunk rested against the wall—a trunk locked and strapped. On the bed sat a very tall and astonishingly blond young woman, engaged in the polite occupation of manicuring her nails.

"Miss Taylor?" hazarded McHenry, and, noting that his muddy shoes made tracks on the carpet, he considerably stayed where he stood.

"That's me. I don't know you, do I?"

"Not yet."

"Sit down," she invited him, pointing to the trunk.

"No, thanks. I'll be here just a minute. I came in to see you on account of a—a friend—Tommy Foster."

The girl started, and put down her cuticle scissors. Her manner was distinctly unfavorable.

"Well?" she said shortly.

McHenry produced his handkerchief



and wiped the perspiration from his forehead. Now that he was actually here he found that his usual presence of mind had deserted him and that he was trembling impotently.

"Well?" she repeated insistently.

"Well, the fact is—Tommy couldn't very well come in, so I came instead—to tell you——"

Her eyes were large and electric. He faltered.

"Is he sick?"

"N-no. Not exactly. But he couldn't come."

"Why couldn't he come? Go ahead. Don't be so slow!"

"I thought—perhaps you've been mistaken—about Tommy. I thought perhaps—you didn't understand——"

"Now, see here," said the girl, widening her eyes alarmingly, "you didn't come in here for nothing! What's the matter with Tommy Foster? Why am I mistaken? What don't I understand? Don't act so bloomin' upstage about it!"

McHenry used his handkerchief again. He felt very much embarrassed, not only at his errand, but also at the surroundings.

"I think perhaps—things have been misrepresented to you," he stammered. "I don't know what you think about Tommy—but you ought to know the truth——"

"What truth—go ahead with it!"

"He isn't coming in at all," he blurted.

For a moment he thought that she would take it calmly and philosophically; but that was only because she examined her nails for a moment without speaking. Then she raised her eyes; and never in his life had he looked into such unmercifully vengeful eyes. Instinctively he recoiled before their rancor.

"Indeed! Well, this is a nice little surprise party, isn't it?" Her voice lifted a tone or two. "And who are you—who are you, you namby-pamby

little dude—coming in here to hand me any such line of conversation as that?" Her voice lifted again. "What business is it of yours? What are you butting in for? Why don't you keep your mouth shut?" Her last sentence was a positive bellow. "What do you know about it?"

"I know *all* about it. He's not coming!"

During the subsequent five minutes McHenry wondered how even such a man as Tommy Foster could ever have been fascinated by such a person as this Miss Taylor. Her language made far less impression on him than her complexion; and while she was uttering the worst of her adequate invectives he was merely wondering what would happen to her hair when the peroxide wore off. He waited patiently until her tirade dwindled to a few final adjectives, and she paused, from sheer weariness, with the ultimate mention of a breach-of-promise suit. McHenry laughed.

"Don't be silly," he urged her. "I suppose you think Tommy has a lot of money——"

"I *know* it!"

"Well, that's where you're wrong. Tommy's one of the best little liars in this county. He hasn't a red cent except what his father gives him, and there wouldn't be much coming to you—afterward!"

"Oh, there wouldn't? A lot you know about it!"

"And as far as a breach-of-promise suit goes—I suppose you know how old he is? No doubt, you've had experience enough to know that you wouldn't get very far in court with a suit against an eighteen-year-old boy!"

"Eighteen! That's a lie. He's twenty-one!"

"He was seventeen when he came to Cambridge—he had a birthday last month."

The girl faced him threateningly.

"Where is he?" she cried. "I want to see him! *He* didn't send a mutt like you in to talk to me. I know Tom! This is some dirty trick of your own. Where is he?" She stamped her foot violently. "*Where is he?*"

McHenry played his last card.

"He's left college and gone back to Chicago," he told her quietly. "That's why I'm here—because I'm a friend of his, and he—he asked me to come and tell you he'd changed his mind!"

"Chicago! But his home is St. Louis!"

"Did he tell you that?" McHenry laughed again. "I told you Tommy's a keen little liar," he said.

The girl pondered for a dozen seconds.

"You see," added Pepper, "Tom likes to have people think he's a whale of a sport. I don't doubt he's told you all sorts of yarns about his money—and all that. Well, he was borrowing money from *me* all the time. I didn't know what it was for, but now I do. I don't doubt he asked you to marry him—but you can't nail him for it, and you know it as well as I do. The only reason I came in to see you was so as not to leave you absolutely in the dark when he didn't show up."

"And I went and bought a suit for thirty dollars—to take the train in——"

"Well," said McHenry dubiously, "I can't help that——"

"But the sneaking little liar left me broke——"

"Well," said McHenry again, "if that's the case—on your word of honor—I suppose I could fix it up with Tommy later——"

Only that morning he had cashed one of his ample allowance checks, so that the roll of bills he produced made the girl's eyes bulge. Quietly she stepped to the door, turned the key, held it up for McHenry's horrified inspection, and tossed it through the open window.

"Now!" she breathed, parting her lips in a venomous smile. "Now—you can just hand me that wad—or *I'll scream!*"

Pepper felt a queer, choking sensation at the back of his throat. He stood paralyzed, utterly incapable of thought or movement. To be discovered here—his muscles suddenly relaxed, and he grinned broadly, to the complete consternation and chagrin of the woman.

"All right," he said. "Scream and be hanged!" and he sat down comfortably on the trunk.

## V.

Toward dusk, Spinden, who was thoroughly weary of his part in the proceeding, heard McHenry's step in the corridor, and beamed upon his captive.

"Now we'll hear the news," he promised, but Tommy Foster failed to display due enthusiasm.

McHenry came in, and sighed heavily.

"Well—it's all right," he reported.

"Pepper!"

"Absolutely all right. She won't start anything."

The Terrible Freshman stared lugubriously at him, but said nothing.

"I'll tell you about it later. The principal thing now is for Thomas here to write a note to his family."

"I'll never do it!"

"Well," pacified McHenry, "you'll be spanked if you don't. You can take your choice."

The freshman sniveled abjectly.

"What do you—want me to write?"

"Two letters—I forgot one to the dean. You can write home first. My motto is always: Do it now. Go over to that desk, Tommy, and write just exactly what I tell you. Get up, Monk, and give him the chair."

Tommy dragged himself to the desk, and picked up a pen.



"My dad—my dad will *murder me!*" he quavered.

"No, he won't," disputed McHenry. "He'll only talk a lot, and start you to work—which'll be good for you! And you can paste this in your hat: you're going to write him that you're quitting because the work is too hard, Tommy, but if I hadn't gone in town for you this afternoon, and taken a few young chances myself, you'd have been expelled—and then I hope he *would* have murdered you! Are you all ready?"

The Terrible Freshman dropped his head on the blotter and wept.

"Come on," advised Spinden. "Buck up, Tommy—be a man!"

"I *won't* write it!"

"Oh, yes, you will," McHenry assured him. "Because, you know, I've got that license in my pocket—and I'll send it out there as sure as shooting."

"But—but my dad——"

"Tom," said Pepper, as kindly as he could, "I don't trust you as far as I can see you. Only you can trust *me*, and you know it! As soon as you hear from your dad, and as soon as you're out a train headed for home, I'll burn this thing in my own fireplace—and that's all anybody will ever know about it, unless *you* tell. But if you *don't* write just what I tell you, and write it without any more dramatics around here, I tell you I'll send it to your father to-night by special delivery! Just get this straight: you're quitting because the work is too hard! Now begin. 'Dear father.'"

With the tears running down his cheeks, the Terrible Freshman wrote, "Dear father."

## VI.

In the first place, McHenry had to go over to the office and harangue the dean for two solid hours, for Tommy Foster, who was on probation anyway, would ordinarily have been expelled for

having cut two successive days with no excuse. In fact, the decree was already promulgated, but McHenry had a flow of eloquence which he had often used in his own behalf, and found supplemented to a satisfactory richness when he was defending another culprit. The upshot of the interview was that the administrative board relented, and allowed Tommy Foster to resign, which also meant that no communication regarding his defects would be held with his parents.

For the next three days, McHenry and Spinden took turns watching over the Terrible Freshman, and on the fourth came a seventeen-page missive from his father. It opened with rage, developed into accusation, mellowed into pure reason, and ended with the consoling statement that it might be better, under all the circumstances, for Tommy to leave college before his intellect broke down under the severe strain of lectures and night study. He could live at home, the letter said, go into the factory, and probably advance much farther in the commercial world than if he had to begin under the handicap of four years spent in academic training which doesn't concern itself especially with the problem of manufacturing and distributing mesh underwear.

Then McHenry and Spinden sold Tommy's furniture for him, bought him a ticket home, and put him on the train. There were still salty rivulets on his cheeks when they shook hands with him at Back Bay, but it didn't occur to him to thank them.

"I wonder," mused Spinden, when the two friends were smoking companionably in McHenry's room that evening, "if the little runt would have amounted to anything if we'd let him stay? It would be an awful wallop for us to think that maybe this episode would have straightened him out, and made a man out of him."

"No—it couldn't be done, Monk. I'm satisfied to get him out of here without his family knowing. They'll still think he's a tin god on wheels. But it's up to them now! I'm satisfied."

"The one thing that peeves me," said Spinden aggrievedly, "is that you won't tell me what happened when you went in town that afternoon."

"Well—I didn't intend to—it wasn't necessary—but if you really want to know——"

"I do that," insisted Spinden. He listened to the narrative with great at-

tention, and drew in his breath heavily at the crisis. "But—but, Pepper!" he gasped. "How in *thunder*—*how* could you get away from *that*!"

McHenry grinned.

"Like rolling off a log," he explained. "I simply called her attention to the facts. You see, it was muddy outdoors, and there was a carpet on the floor. I stood right in one place, and then sat down on the trunk. My foot-prints were all right there by the door. And the window was wide open—and *there was a fire escape!*"



### "ONLY A STAB"

THOUGH Ty Cobb has been the subject of thousands of stories, comparatively little of his actual personality ever has been conveyed to the public. This is because he is averse to personal mention—a statement that doubtless will excite astonishment and incredulity, and perhaps derision, among those who have deemed him a "swelled head." But it is an actuality. Perhaps no better proof of it can be offered than the course he took when he was stabbed by a highwayman in Detroit one night in 1912, when he was on his way to catch the Tiger car for the East.

He proceeded to the depot and went to his berth without saying a word about the affair to any one except the Tiger trainer, Harry Tuthill. He mentioned it to the trainer because he thought the wound might need attention.

And verily, it did! Tuthill discovered a wound in Cobb's back more than two inches deep by about three inches long! Trainer Harry applied antiseptic solutions, and when they reached Syracuse a prominent surgeon was called, who regarded the wound as so serious that it must not be sewed up at once, owing to danger of infection. So, with a yard and a half of gauze, he bandaged it, and left it open to drain.

That same day, instead of being in a hospital, Cobb played a full game with the Tigers against the Syracuse team. As an exhibition of grit, it was without a parallel. He supplemented it the following day by playing in a championship game against the Yankees in New York with his wonted energy and dash. Almost any other player similarly wounded would have been out of the game for two weeks.

By continuing with his team, not missing a single game on the Eastern trip, he convinced the public that the stab had been merely a scratch, not worth bothering about.



# The Mascot's Notch

By Bozeman Bulger

*Author of "The Black Diamond," Etc.*

How a ball game was won through a two-inch peephole in a door in the right-field corner of the fence. A story of baseball where the mascot has an inning. Mascoting is no cinch, especially if you are mascot for the champion Grays; it is a real business

IN the big-league home of the champion Grays there is a narrow, sliding door in the right-field corner of the fence. It leads from the field to the clubhouse. On this door have been cut more than two hundred notches, each commemorative of some historic stunt that landed a visiting scalp in the bag of the Grays. Few clubs have a door like this, because few clubs have a manager like Tim Doherty. Then, again, this door is the personal invention of Doherty, and other leaders are disposed to respect what they regard as his copyright.

Tim Doherty, you understand, is put out of games quite often. In fact, he established a record his last year, being tin-canned by umpires no less than thirty-eight times. The fan of discernment will realize that when a manager is ejected from the field he is not, under ordinary circumstances, in position to direct his athletic charges in crucial moments. Of course, the captain can attend to the routine, but Tim Doherty is paid twenty thousand dollars a year for doing things in a pinch. Hence the sliding door—likewise the notches.

The method is quite simple. Immediately upon receiving the order of the tin can, Doherty stations himself on the other side of the door, out of range of the umpire's vision, and through a two-inch peephole views the proceedings. On the inside is stationed a lad

who holds the joint and responsible position of bat boy and mascot. Manager Tim decides on what shall be done and the mascot does the rest. How often have the fans seen the flying legs of a small boy, in regulation uniform, speeding him from the right-field fence to the bench? No lad slow of foot ever had a job on the Grays. Manager Tim Doherty's craze for speed is not limited to the paid athletes. Even the clubhouse rubber must be able to do a six-foot broad jump when spoken to sharply.

Near the top of Tim Doherty's famous sliding door, a foot above the other commemorative notches, there is a cut much deeper. Above and beneath it are the carved initials: "S. M." And right there is the backbone of this yarn.

Those mystic letters stand for "Spud" Monahan. No, he was not a great player. Spud was no player at all, but he was the only member of the Grays to get his name on Tim Doherty's sliding door. Spud was the mascot and, at the weight, was champion of them all. He tipped the beam at ninety-one pounds, and could do the distance from the sliding door to the bench in fifteen seconds, flat. So many quick and effective orders did he deliver to the managerless Grays during their pennant-winning season that he was declared in for a half share of the

world's series prize money. There are opportunities, you see, for even a mascot to reach the top of his profession. And mascoting is a real business. Mrs. Monahan, the widowed mother of Spud, could have told of how the family larder was kept filled for three years through the efforts of Spud in piloting the Grays to a championship. That, however, is digressing.

Spud's particular pal on the Grays was Fritz Dahmbusch, a big recruit outfielder. We say outfielder out of politeness, for Fritz never got to play it—then. He was kept in a far corner of the bench presumably as a pinch hitter and substitute—if needed. Manager Doherty had a way of seeing that he was never needed—not for the first year. He wanted Fritz to look on and gradually absorb the general idea of big-league ball. Though that name of Dahmbusch was enough to make any man shouldering the good old Irish one of Doherty lose interest, Tim had good judgment.

The manager of the Grays saw the big German do something at the bat one day that marked him as a natural hitter. Even if he could never do anything else, that was enough excuse for holding him. As a matter of fact, Fritz Dahmbusch had been signed because back at Pass Christian he had knocked boards off the fence with home runs so often that, down there, he was honored with the sobriquet of Dutch Terror. The nickname did not stick in the big league because Doherty and his players could never believe that any man with a German name like Dahmbusch could be a terror. When finally honored with a nickname by the Grays he was called "Wienie"—not elegant but expressive. It came with his troubles which began early in March.

If Fritz had not walked off first base while the pitcher held the ball in his hand, that first day in Texas, the

chances are he would have got a regular job. But a bone play in the spring usually means the bench all summer. And so it was with Dahmbusch—Wienie.

"As your head now stands," Manager Doherty explained to the big German on the eventful day of his bone, "it would make a barrel of collar buttons, if taken apart by a skilled mechanic. I want you to sit on this bench and learn something." Thereupon Dahmbusch took his seat for the season. He stoically swallowed his medicine and said nothing. In fact, he never said anything if it could be avoided.

On his first attempt to learn the hook slide out there at the training camp, Dahmbusch, who was running ahead of Mike Hennessey, hit the sand so awkwardly and so hard that he crumpled up in the pit, unable to move.

"Hey!" shouted the more adept Mr. Hennessey. "Get that big German sausage out of the way or he'll get killed."

That form of baseball humor is always good for a laugh, and from then on Dahmbusch was known as Wienie. Once a baseball nickname is applied in the big league it sticks for life.

As was intimated, Wienie was not a talkative young man, and, lacking the ability to join in the fire of wit that occasionally lighted up the bench of the Grays, he withdrew to his corner and remained there. Nobody cared much about him one way or the other, and Dahmbusch became more of a bench fixture than a ball player. Occasionally Manager Doherty would tell him to go out and hit fungo flies to the outfield, and Wienie would do the job in workmanlike manner. Had he been told to dive into the fence to test the strength of the boards he would have done that with just as much effort at thoroughness.

As Wienie lacked in pepper, the other



players would not let him in their bunt fielding games on the side lines—that one form of practice so fascinating to players—so the only thing left for him was to play toss with Spud Monahan, the ninety-one-pound mascot. Therein began their friendship.

One afternoon, while the Grays were in a paroxysm of joy over a long hit by Mike Hennessey, tossing their bats in the air, chasing each other over the green, and bringing down mock maledictions on the head of the hitter as he slid into third base, little Spud caught sight of the stolid Wienie Dahmbusch backed up in his usual corner of the bench. Spud stopped and stared. Down the cheeks of the big German two tears were trickling. That was worth investigating.

"What do you know about that, Wienie?" the little mascot yelled, as he ran over and tugged at Dahmbusch's outstretched foot.

"About what?" asked Wienie.

"That hit. Wasn't it a beaut? I guess that Mike can't pop 'em!"

"Good hit," agreed Dahmbusch. But that was all.

"Why don't you get out there with 'em?" asked the boy, pointing to the jubilant players. "Why the weep stuff?"

"They don't want me," Wienie explained. There was a moment of silence, and in the German's eyes there came a far-away look. "I used to hit 'em that way down at Pass Christian, kid."

"Yes, and I bet you could bust 'em in this league, too," declared the sympathetic Spud.

By this time the excitement had subsided somewhat, and Spud sat down beside Dahmbusch to try and cheer him up. None of the other players had cast a glance his way.

"Could you hit left-handers?" the boy asked.

"That was my long suit, kid," and

the big German showed a little interest. For the first time, even though it was the bat boy, somebody had deigned to talk to him.

"How did you hit for the season?" inquired Spud. "Seems to me I heard 'em say when you first showed up that you was a fence buster."

"I wasn't so rotten. Look in the official guide and you'll see where I hit three hundred and sixty—was among the first three."

"What do you think of that left-hander out here?" Spud indicated the opposing pitcher. The boy was trying hard to keep up a conversation.

"He hasn't got a thing," declared Wienie. "Reminds me of a fellow named Martin, down on the Gulf coast." The big fellow smiled reminiscently. "And say, boy, there was one fellow I *could* hit!"

"He's in the big league now, ain't he?" the boy inquired.

"Yes, he's fill-in pitcher for the White Legs. Don't know how he's doing in fast company, but he's got a slow ball that ought to get him by for a while."

"Could you hit it?"

"Knock it a mile, son." There was a twinkle in Wienie's eye for the first time since joining the Grays. "If I ever get a chance to bat against him, kid, you can bet he won't pitch a slow one."

"Hey, what are you boys quarrelin' 'bout?" cried Mike Hennessey, first to notice Spud and the big German.

The rest of the gang laughed uproariously, while Spud, blushing painfully, fled from the bench. Dahmbusch calmly looked over the gang, and withdrew into his shell of silence.

"That kid'll teach you a lot of big-league baseball if you'll stick around him," Captain Jimmy Tyler suggested to Dahmbusch, while picking out a bat. He was next up. The German did not reply.

As Spud Monahan was leaving the grounds after the game he heard his name called, and turned. It was Dahmbusch.

"Say, little fellow, how'd you like to take me around and show me some of the town?"

Spud was too astonished to reply.

"We just got paid off," explained the big bench warmer, "and I'll stand all the expenses. Can you go?"

"What you mean—go?" asked Spud.

"Be my guide. You know, kid, I've never seen much of this town. The rest of the boys never invite me, and I don't like to butt in. I'd like to see the museum. Then we could go to a lot of things. I'm new to these big cities. How 'bout it?"

"I'll have to ask ma," said Spud, with some hesitation. "Go by home with me, and if she is willin', I'll take you over the jumps."

If you can picture Fritz Dahmbusch, over six feet tall and weighing two hundred pounds, being led down the street by Spud Monahan, the two engaged in earnest conversation, the laugh is yours.

This strangely mated couple finally reached the abode of the Monahans, a three-room flat on the top floor of a tenement. Mrs. Monahan knew her son's step, and was at the door before he had a chance to ring. She pulled the door partly open, and then the widow stopped.

"Why—why, who is that with you, son?"

"Oh, this?" Spud nodded toward Wienie, who stood on the darkened steps. "Why, this is my pal—Wienie Dahmbusch."

A thought flitted through the little woman's mind that her husband never had a pal with a name like that—Dahmbusch. But anybody who was Spud's pal was welcome in the home of the Widow Monahan.

"Come right in," she said hospitably,

and then through the widened crack of the door she saw Wienie. As little Spud led the giant German into the living room, Mrs. Monahan stood with her arms akimbo, flabbergasted.

"This is Mr. Dahmbusch, ma," Spud explained. "He's one of the Grays—wants me to show him the town."

"Wants you to do *what*?"

"I'm very lonely, Mrs. Monahan," interrupted the big German, "and as none of the boys'll take me around, I wanted to get Spud to show me the sights. You have a bright boy there. I'm afraid, though, we picked a bad time to come and see you. It's nearly dinner time."

"No, you didn't," said Mrs. Monahan. "You stay right here and have dinner with Spud and me. Being so far away from home, it might do you good. Dutch, ain't you?"

"Yes," Wienie admitted apologetically, "I'm German, but my folks have a lot of friends among the Irish. But I'd be buttin' in on you, I'm afraid."

"Nothing of the sort," declared the widow. "I've got something made to order for you—pigs' knuckles and sauerkraut."

"I'll stay," decided Dahmbusch, "and thank you."

That little dinner party was to Wienie, as well as the Monahans, a memorable affair. It was Wienie's first taste of home cooking since leaving the old fireside—and German cooking, too!

Around the Monahan table, Fritz Dahmbusch unburdened himself. He told of his struggles to get out of the minor leagues; of how he had been regarded the best hitter on the Pass Christian club; of how he had seen visions of greatness with the Grays; of how he had encountered nothing but slights. He attributed this first to the fact that he had pulled a bone the first day, and, second, to the fact that he was not noted as a conversationalist. But the Monahans voted him a good



one, and listened attentively, sympathetically. In that hour, Spud's eyes grew big and wide as he got the real dope on the German. He made up his mind that Wienie would deliver the goods if he ever got the chance. Yes, and right then Spud decided that Wienie would get the chance. He'd see to it.

Mrs. Monahan had no objection to Spud showing the big German around the town. The two pals had the time of their lives.

The next afternoon, Mike Hennessey won some money betting the gang that he had seen Wienie smile, and that he would do so again before the game was over. Dahmbusch actually laughed out loud at one of Tyler's jokes.

It happened to be a busy afternoon for Spud, and, after the first three innings, he had little opportunity to talk things over with his pal. Manager Doherty had a run-in with the umpire over a decision at the plate, and was ordered to the bench. From there the irate leader of the Grays continued to make remarks bearing on the past life and antecedents of the umps until finally ordered to the clubhouse. But Manager Tim did not go to the clubhouse. He went out of sight of the umpire, and, with the aid of Spud Monahan, did business from the sliding door.

Not a player on the team was as fatigued as the mascot when the battle ended. The little fellow confided in Wienie Dahmbusch his belief that, from fast running, he had sprung a Charley horse in each leg.

"No," said Wienie. "Little fellows don't have Charley horses. You'll be all right to-morrow."

"The boss certainly had me jumping, Wienie," Spud declared; "but it's all right. That last shift won the game. Got to hand it to him. That guy is a wonder."

This from a little shaver who could

have been put in a big man's vest pocket made Dahmbusch wonder. He had seen old-timers in the bush leagues who could not begin to cope with this youngster in grasping a baseball situation. Still, Wienie should have remembered that Spud had been the official mouthpiece for Tim Doherty, during his periods of temporary exile, for three years. And when it came to quick thinking, in a baseball way, Tim was as fast in the head as Ty Cobb is in the feet.

"Come with me for a ride on top of the bus down Riverside Drive," Dahmbusch suggested. "It's early yet, and you can get back in time for dinner." Wienie wanted to hear the mascot talk.

"You are some guy, Wienie!" exclaimed Spud approvingly. "I'm with you. None of these other bushers ever come across like that. Me for you."

Somehow the German liked that freshness. In some kids it would have been unbearable, but in Spud it was a delight. He meant no disrespect. Young Mr. Monahan had never been taught to respect his seniors, unless they were *very* old. He looked upon himself as one of the players, and talked their language. That was all the language he knew. Long since, young Monahan had ceased to be interested in the talk of the boys of his own age. In a way, he was a little old man, too wise for his generation.

It was a great day for a ride down the Drive—just hot enough for the salt breezes off the river, as Spud expressed it, to take hold. In their swaying, jostling seat on top of the big bus the young mascot and his German pal looked the baseball situation in the face and got right down to cases.

"Spud," said Dahmbusch, after a spell of thoughtful silence, "think you'll ever be a manager?"

"Cinch," promptly answered the boy. "There ain't one of them bushers on

the bench got anything on me. Lots of times Manager Tim has let me tell 'em what to do. I know a ball player when I see one, too."

"You've taken so many orders from that peephole to the bench," observed Wienie, "I reckon you'd know how to run the club if Doherty wasn't there, wouldn't you?" From the corner of his eye the big fellow noticed an unusual expression—one of sudden thought—light up the face of his little pal. He laughed.

"Where does the laugh stuff come in?" demanded Spud. "Maybe you think I couldn't do it?"

"Sure you could," Wienie agreed, to urge him on. This was the kind of stuff that Dahmbusch liked.

"Wienie"—and Spud looked up into the eyes of his giant friend—"if I got you a chance some day, would you make good?"

"Well," Dahmbusch laughed, "I'd do the best I could."

"That's Dutch stuff," announced Spud, with a show of disgust. "Why don't you say: 'It's a hundred to one. Go and bet on it, kid.' Don't go round sayin' you'll do your best. That don't get you nothin'. Get a little Irish in you, and offer to knock anybody's block off who doubts it. Get me? I've listened to Mr. Doherty a long time, and them's the kind of guys that he falls for."

And that was the best lesson that Dahmbusch ever got. The boy's quaint but true philosophy was never forgotten by that German outfielder. Wienie was still thinking it over, when there came a dig in his ribs.

"You told me that you could hit any left-hander that ever lived, didn't you?" asked Spud.

The big fellow nodded.

"Well," young Mr. Monahan continued, "what was the guy's name you said was made for you to hit?"

"Martin—Tex Martin. But don't

worry, kid. I won't get a chance this season. The race'll be too close when the White Legs get here."

"You mean you think you won't," the kid corrected, with an air of finality. "I'm goin' to get you in there some way, and if you throw me down or show a yellow streak like that Wilson did last year—well, nobody'll ever get me on a bus with you again. But you won't, Wienie. I know a game guy when I see one—even if he is Dutch."

Following that bus ride, the life of Wienie Dahmbusch took on an added worry. To himself he admitted nervousness over the possibility of making a bad showing before Manager Doherty, but when he thought of falling down in the presence of Spud Monahan he was seized by a feeling of absolute fear. Still he yearned to go in and try. Just what Spud had meant by asking him those questions on the bus he could not fathom. Instinctively, though, he knew that the little fellow with the old man's brain had something up his sleeve.

The series with the White Legs was to be a tough one—it was of four games—and the best that any of the Gray players hoped for was an even break. In the clubhouse they had gone over the pitching possibilities of their opponents with great care. There was a little satisfaction over the knowledge that two of the star twirlers of the White Legs had been used up over in Boston, and would not go in again right away except in cases of emergency.

"Who is this fellow Martin?" Mike Hennessey asked, as he went down the printed list and noticed the name of a new pitcher; "some busher, I reck'n."

"I see where he won a game for them over at Philadelphia," spoke up Jimmy Tyler, the captain. "He must have something."

Spud Monahan, who had been sharpening up the spikes on one of Hen-



nessey's shoes, became suddenly interested.

"He ain't got a thing but a slow ball," the mascot declared. "But they tell me that's a bird." Spud looked around for confirmation, but Wienie Dahmbusch had not come in from the practice field.

"What do *you* know about him, kid?" Tyler inquired.

"Never mind what I know," said Spud. "I've got the dope on him. If you fellows don't watch out for that floater he'll have some of you breakin' your backs."

It was well known on the Grays that Spud always read the newspapers, and it was taken for granted that he had got his dope from that source.

"All right, Mr. Mascot," laughed Tyler. "If you've called the turn, you'll get that glove that I've been promising you."

"That's a bet," Spud calmly announced, and went right on sharpening the spikes.

The gang of old leaguers grinned. They all liked the little fellow, and had more genuine respect for his judgment than they would have cared to admit. Many of his tips had been profitable to Manager Doherty.

Lefty Evans, an old-timer, pitched the first game against the Grays and won out for the White Legs in a ten-inning fight, but not until Manager Doherty had been ordered off the field. Spud Monahan was on the job at the sliding door, and almost wore a track in the turf flying to and from the bench. All his efforts were unavailing. Doherty tried every shift that he knew, but Lefty Evans had the Grays eating out of his hand for the whole ten innings. The Grays were notoriously weak against left-handed pitching.

"Looks like they are goin' to feed us on them southpaws throughout the series," Jimmy Tyler said to Mike Hennessey. "One of the subs over there

has just tipped me off that they are goin' to pitch this fellow Martin tomorrow—another side-wheeler."

"That's the fellow Spud says has the slow ball?"

"That's the guy, all right," Jimmy answered.

"Left-händer, with a slow ball! Get out with that stuff!" Then occurred a historic incident on the bench of the Grays.

"That's what he's got, all right!" spoke up Wienie Dahmbusch from his corner.

The whole gang turned in astonishment. It was the first thing Wienie had said about baseball since he had been on the club.

"Yes," he went on, "and it's a bird, too. Don't let anybody fool you." With that, the taciturn German withdrew into his shell.

"What do you suppose is comin' over that Wienie?" Tyler asked of Hennessey, as they walked across the field after defeat. "He's actually talkin'. If we tell Doherty that he'll say we've been drinking."

At the clubhouse, Manager Doherty had withdrawn to his private office, and the few remarks he made as he closed the door were surrounded by a blue halo. Tim was a hard loser, and, on this afternoon, was particularly sore. He was put off the field for disputing a decision that he still insisted was wrong. In the outer room, the players were dressing as hurriedly and quietly as possible, so as to escape any fresh outbreak of managerial wrath. On a losing day there were never any songs or jokes in the clubhouse of the Grays.

"Hey, Spud!" the manager yelled from his office. "Bring me my razor, and be quick about it. Don't you know I can't dress until I shave?"

The little mascot knew the ways of the manager, and winked at some of the players as he started on a run.

"Old Doctor Killjoy has broke out

again," he said, in a half whisper as he passed Mike Hennessey.

Once inside the private office, Spud took on courage, and began to think. Being a privileged character, he perched himself on the flat arm of Tim's big chair and watched the manager lather his face.

"What are you thinking about, Spud?" asked Doherty, his voice taking on a more kindly tone. Tim was fond of the kid.

"I was thinking, Mr. Tim, about a way of beatin' them White Legs to-morrow."

"Well, by George! I'm glad somebody on the club is at least trying to think," declared Doherty. "What's on your mind, son?"

"This guy, Martin, they are goin' to pitch to-morrow, Mr. Tim, has got nothin' but a slow ball, and there's one guy I know can hit it."

"Who's that?" and the manager turned from the mirror, with his razor held aloft. Behind the coat of lather there was a smile, but Spud couldn't see it.

"Wienie Dahmbusch," Spud answered.

Doherty laughed aloud. "Strong for the Dutchman, aren't you, kid?"

"Yes, sir; and, believe me, he can bust that pill. He'd kill a slow one."

"No, not this year," Doherty said kindly. "Maybe later on; but he's got a lot to learn. Anyway, kid, you are entitled to something for thinking—here." He handed Spud a quarter.

Young Mr. Monahan was somewhat disappointed as he made his way home that night, but in his little knob, as he always called his head, there still lurked an idea. He may have had other faults, but Spud was not a quitter.

Sure enough, Tex Martin, the left-hander, was in the box for the White Legs the next day, and, equally sure enough, he was in there with a slow ball that was a corker. Batter after

batter went up and took a swing at it, only to find themselves spun all the way around before the ball got to the plate. It was the most tantalizing floater that had been seen in the park of the Grays all season. Then, just as some smart hitter would think he had found a way of timing it, Tex Martin would switch to a fast one, and stand him on his ear.

The Grays resorted to every trick in their repertoire of putting a pitcher up in the air, but there was nothing doing with this deliberate newcomer. They tossed up their bats in derision, and from the coaching lines Manager Doherty made some cutting remarks to Martin about a yellow streak in the back of his neck. But there was no disturbing this youngster. He would merely look at Doherty and smile.

Jack Conner, the Gray's pitcher, was also going good, but the White Legs got to him in the fifth inning and grabbed a lead of two runs. So far, the Grays had nothing. Doherty had made two switches in the batting order, putting in right-handed hitters against Martin, but even they had failed.

In the seventh inning, Jimmy Tyler got the first clean hit—a two-bagger—off Martin, and the Grays swarmed out of their dugout for a demonstration on the side lines. Mike Hennessey, next up, tried to catch Martin off his guard with a bunt. Unfortunately—for Mike—the ball rolled to the right side of the pitcher's box. Instead of whirling and throwing to first and letting the man on second advance to third, as is the custom of pitchers who will not take a chance, Martin, as he stooped for the ball, yelled for the third baseman to get back to the bag. With a one-handed scoop, he gathered up the ball and tossed it to third in time to catch Tyler as he slid into the bag.

The umpire called the captain of the Grays out. The blow-up followed.



Manager Tim Doherty, who had been coaching on that corner, was wild.

"Out? Out?" he screamed at the official. "You're crazy. He missed him that far"—Tim indicated the space by holding his hands a foot apart.

"Go away!" ordered the umpire indignantly, as Doherty rushed toward him. "The man was out, and you know it."

The Grays' manager rushed to the other umpire, as a last resort, but that dignitary turned his back and walked away. Back to the other umpire ran Doherty, but there was nothing doing. By this time the whole Gray team had formed a moving circle around the umps, and the home crowd, accepting Doherty's side of the argument, of course began to hiss the decision.

"You get to the bench," the umpire finally ordered Tim, and pulled out his watch. Doherty realized the danger of a forfeited game, and reluctantly obeyed. Every few feet, though, he would stop to make some comment, for the benefit of the crowd, on what he thought of umpires in general. When the field was finally cleared, the next Gray batter got a base on balls, and Hennessey, who was on first during the argument, moved up to second.

"There you go!" screamed Tim Doherty from the dugout. "Lost the game for us."

"Now, you shut up," cautioned the field umpire, standing at first base, "or you'll go to the clubhouse." But Doherty was not of the shutting-up kind.

"That would have been three on bases, and none out," he yelled. "Fine pair of bones, you are. . . . Look at that, you big fathead!" Tim Doherty walked out to the grass and fell flat on his back, in burlesque imitation of a man who had dropped dead.

Warren, the catcher, had been hit by a pitched ball!

"Get up from there," the umpire ordered Doherty, "and get out of the

grounds!" This last affront was the finish.

Manager Doherty jumped to his feet in a rage.

"Get out of the grounds!" repeated the umpire. "You, I mean"—and he angrily shook a finger at Tim.

"Who's goin' to put me out?" countered Doherty. "I'd like to see you try it, you big stiff!"

"Get out of here, I say!" The indignant official walked over to where he could look Tim in the face. His own face was livid. "And get out quick!"

Doherty deliberately turned and tossed his cap in the air, and gave the crowd a laugh by mimicking the official's pose. To top it off, he tossed up a handful of dirt, and then, folding his arms, refused to move. Tim had lost all control of himself. He was in one of his bad spells.

Two or three of the players, seeing their manager in bad, came around and tried to persuade him to leave. It was of no avail.

"Let 'em forfeit the game, if they want to!" he cried. "They'd steal it from us, anyhow. It's my park, and I don't move. Now, put me out, one of you big stew!" He had gone too far.

The next thing Doherty knew two big policemen had him by the arms and were dragging him across the field. He struggled hard, but in muscle those coppers had the better of him. The far-famed leader of the Grays was ignominiously hauled over the grass, to be finally taken through the little sliding door that led to the clubhouse.

Spud Monahan had never seen his boss in such a rage; but, knowing his own job, the little fellow sped to the sliding door as fast as his legs would carry him. He took a long look through the peephole and then sprinted back to the bench. For the moment Spud was without a leader. The policemen and their charge had not stopped at the exit.

In the meantime it had dawned upon the Grays that they had the bases full of runners, were two runs behind in the score, and Jack Conner, the pitcher, was next at bat! Conner was the weakest hitter on the club. Here was the one big chance to win, or, at least, tie the score, and a pitcher up!

"What'll we do, Mike?" asked Tyler, the captain, now in charge.

"Darned if I know! Put in a pincher, I reckon," Hennessey replied.

"We've used up everybody but McCracken, and he hits left-handed."

"That's right," agreed Hennessey. "We can't put a left-hander in there against that Martin. What'd the boss say?"

"He ain't said nothin' so far. Looks like Tim got the real raus this time."

"Get a batter up here!" demanded the umpire. "Hurry up, too!"

"Go on up there and stall," Tyler instructed Jack Conner, who had been waiting. "Tie your shoe on the way, and kill time." The pitcher started. At that moment Captain Tyler caught sight of Spud Monahan, standing ten feet away, his mouth gaping.

"What are you doin' there, kid? Are you paralyzed? What did the boss say?" In the meantime Jack Conner had finished untying and retying one shoe, and was starting on the other. The umpire was fuming.

"Cut out that stalling," he ordered Conner, "and get up to the bat. This is no cricket game."

"Make 'em play! Make 'em play!" they were yelling at the umpire from the White Legs' bench. "You ain't goin' to let 'em get away with that stuff, are you? They're making a sucker out of you."

"Well, what did the boss say, I asked you?" Tyler demanded of Spud.

"He ain't said nothin'," declared the kid. "Them bulls dragged him right on past the gate."

"Well, he's back by now, you little

bonehead!" snapped Tyler. "Beat it there in a hurry. Get the old man's order, quick!"

The little mascot started on a dead run for the sliding door. Jack Conner was doing everything he could think of to those shoes, but he couldn't stall much longer. The umpire finally pulled his watch. As he did so, Jack took a look toward right field, and saw Spud with his face against the peephole in the sliding door. He could, at least, go up and have one ball called on him. Anyway, something had to be done to prevent a forfeiture, and, nodding at Tyler, who was quick to understand, Conner walked up and took his position at bat.

"The kid must be gettin' enough orders to last all season," muttered the impatient Tyler, watching the mascot at the sliding door. He then sighed in relief. Spud was coming on the fastest sprint he had ever made.

"What'd he say?" asked Tyler, as the kid came up, panting for breath.

"Put in Wienie Dahmbusch!"

Spud was blowing so he could say no more. He was as pale as paste.

"All right," declared Tyler. "Tim's gone crazy, but it's his ball club. Here goes. Say your prayers, fellows."

Jack Conner was called from the plate, and the big German picked up a bat and started. As Dahmbusch waited for the announcement to the crowd, Spud took him by the arm and walked with him to the plate.

"Now's your chance, Wienie," the boy whispered, as he patted the big fellow on the hand. "If you don't make good, this is where you and me splits."

At the sight of the lumbering German, there was a laugh from the fans, but it quickly choked in their throats. Tex Martin, before he had realized the identity of the batter, shoved a slow one up to the plate. Taking one of those hefty swings that ball players call a "Moriarty," Wienie waded in.



He had timed it perfectly. With a sharp thump, and a consequent rattle, the ball struck the center-field fence on a dead line, and, glancing away from the fielder, bounded to the right-field corner, for three bases.

Three Gray runners crossed the plate, and—— Well, what's the use of going any farther?

Jimmy Tyler and Mike Henessey were first to reach the clubhouse, with Spud Monahan close in their wake. In the little private office they found Manager Tim Doherty, and with him were the two policemen.

"Well, I guess that was bad!" cried Tyler, in high glee. "Talk about givin' them the unexpected, that last shift you made, Tim, was the best thing you ever pulled in your life."

"What shift?" asked Tim, still surly.

"Putting that Dahmbusch in to hit. That big sausage took a wallop at the first one pitched, and broke up the old ball game—zowie!"

"I don't get you," said Doherty, somewhat puzzled. "What do you mean

—put Dahmbusch in?" Tyler was now certain that his boss was crazy.

"Don't you remember tellin' Spud, through the peephole, for me to take Jack Conner out and let the big German hit?" he asked.

"Why, you're off your nut!" declared Doherty. "These two bulls have had me cornered in the office. I haven't been to the peephole since the game started."

Just then the mascot stuck his head in. Tyler began to see light.

"Why, you little brat!"

But Spud's legs were almost as fast as those of Tyler, and out of the door and onto the field they raced. The captain didn't catch the kid until he was near the sliding door.

Then it was that Jimmy Tyler, borrowing a penknife, cut the deep notch, high up on the panel. Manager Doherty, who had followed to see the fun, added the "S. M." initials, which he carved with great care.

Wienie Dahmbusch is now a regular, and boards with the Widow Monahan.



## PARTICULAR ABOUT THE AILMENT

A COLORED lawyer in a Southern town was arguing a case which had to do with the breaking of a will made by an old negro man. The attorney contended that the old darky, in addition to many physical ailments, had been weak-minded when he had made the will.

The court asked the lawyer several questions about the physical troubles and mental condition of the dead man, and to all these queries the lawyer answered briskly.

"Now," asked the court finally, "did this old man have any lucid intervals?"

"Well, as to dat, jedge," replied the colored lawyer after a considerable pause, "de opinion seems to be dat it was mos'ly a case of ankilosed knee."



## AN ANATOMICAL MISTAKE

JUST before the baseball season opened, Joe Engel, one of the young pitchers for the Nationals in the American League, wrote to J. Ed. Grillo, the sporting editor:

DEAR MR. GRILLO: I am on my way to see Bonesetter Reese, and I think, when he gets through with my arm, I'll be a better pitcher than ever.

Grillo replied:

DEAR JOE: You're making a mistake in going to see Bonesetter Reese about your arm. Get him to treat that head.

# An Amateur Gunman

By Charles Belmont Davis

Coward be he who at the call of woman in distress fails to buckle on his sword and at the risk of death itself become knight-errant to the lady

THE chief clerk of the Hotel Bellevue swung around the register and blotted the freshly written name of David Daskam.

"Room and bath," said Daskam.

The chief clerk looked a little dubious, and consulted with the room clerk. The latter glanced over his list and shook his head. It began to appear as if Daskam would have to look farther for accommodations, when the room clerk suddenly said:

"Number four-sixty-four is vacant. The gentleman left a few minutes ago."

"He only arrived an hour ago," said the chief clerk.

"I know he did," said the room clerk, "but he got a telegram or something. Said he had to hurry back to New York."

At this moment, Daskam's only interest in the conversation was whether or not he was to get a room and bath. Later on it took on a much greater significance.

While the bell boy unstrapped his bags Daskam looked about the bright, pretty room, with its mahogany furniture and chintzy-colored wall paper, and was glad that his predecessor, whoever he might be, had been called back to New York. The predecessor had, apparently, left no traces of his brief visit. That is, Daskam did not notice any until after the boy had left the room. Then, lying on the chiffonier, he found a note bearing the address "Arthur Cutting—Bellevue Hotel." The envelope had evidently never been sealed, so David

took out the card that it contained and found that it was a two weeks' invitation to the Oriole Club.

Daskam knew neither of the names of the two men written on it, who stood sponsor for Cutting, but he knew that the Oriole Club was one of the most exclusive clubs in the South. His first instinct was to tear up the card, and then some nebulous, subconscious idea made him hesitate, and, placing it against the mirror, he once more read the formally worded invitation.

Daskam knew that his stay in Baltimore would be, in all probability, for at least a week, and in the entire town, to the best of his knowledge, he knew no one. The Oriole Club was, no doubt, worthy of its reputation, and would make an excellent place to rest, write his letters, and take an occasional meal. The only possible danger in using the invitation was that the doorman to whom he would have to show it at his first visit might know Arthur Cutting. But Daskam quickly decided that as Cutting had evidently not used the card for the short time he had been in Baltimore, and unless he had previously been a frequent guest at the club, there was little chance of trouble from this source. Once within the club doors no one would know him or question how he got in, and would, no doubt, leave him to his own devices. The very audacity of entering so exclusive a club as the Oriole on another man's invitation was in itself a strong element of safety.



At exactly ten o'clock that same evening Daskam loitered up the steps of the Oriole Club. A liveried servant bowed stiffly while David fumbled leisurely for the card of invitation. Having at last found the engraved piece of pasteboard among several letters in his inside coat pocket, he showed it to the servant. The latter glanced at the name, bowed again, and Daskam passed on in to the spacious hallway.

Half a dozen men were lounging about the big stone hearth, where a log fire was crackling cheerily. Outside the weather had turned cold and raw, and Daskam smiled pleasantly at the geniality of the scene and at the luxury of the deep leather chairs before the fireplace and the low lounges ranged against the warmly tinted walls.

As if to give the impression that he was no stranger to his surroundings he sauntered slowly into the reading room, picked up an evening paper from the center table, sat down at a small side table, and rang for a servant. Having ordered a Scotch and soda, he lit a cigarette, and proceeded to glance over the news of the day.

Before he had finished the headlines on the first page of the newspaper or the servant had brought him his drink another servant approached, and, asking him if he were Mr. Cutting, announced that he was wanted at the telephone.

Here was a contingency which Daskam could in no way have foreseen. However, the servant was waiting to lead him to the telephone, and it was perfectly evident that the situation demanded that he should follow. What excuse he would give to the man on the other end of the wire depended on what the man said to him. This worried Daskam not at all, as any excuse would give him a chance to ring off, and he could hurriedly leave the club and never return. But once more the unexpected happened, and, greatly

to Daskam's surprise, the voice at the other end of the wire was not that of a man. It was the voice of a woman—a low, sweet, soothing voice, a voice as soft as velvet, as tender as a young girl's caress.

As its first tones reached Daskam he cautiously closed the door of the booth which he had carefully left open in case that immediate flight should prove necessary.

"Is this Mr. Arthur Cutting?" asked the voice.

Disguising the not unmusical tones of his own voice and assuming a high falsetto, Daskam said that it was.

"Good," said the lady on the other end of the wire. "That's fine. I'm so glad I've found you. I'm Mrs. Philip Madden. I suppose you think it fearfully strange for a woman you've never met or even seen to call you up. But it's quite necessary. Really, indeed, it is—quite."

Daskam hastened to assure Mrs. Madden that, necessary or unnecessary, he regarded the fact that she had called him up as a boon and as an exhibition of confidence which he appreciated to the fullest extent.

The fact that the lady had never met nor seen Arthur Cutting, whom he was impersonating, gave David renewed confidence, and he proceeded to talk in his natural voice.

"But may I ask," he questioned his new-found friend, "why I am indebted to you for this unexpected telephone call?"

"You may not," cooed the cool, velvety voice. "It is not at all the kind of thing I care to discuss over a telephone. It will be necessary for me to see you, and the sooner the better. What are you doing for the next hour?"

Notwithstanding the waiting Scotch and soda, David admitted that his plans were vague and trifling.

"Good," said Mrs. Madden, "then you

had better take a taxicab and come to my house at once."

She hurriedly concluded the interview by giving Daskam her address, and rang off. David carefully wrote the address on a slip of paper before leaving the booth, and then slowly retraced his steps to the reading room, where he found his drink awaiting him. He sat down at the little table, took a long sip of the cool, refreshing liquid, and, for a few moments, gazed thoughtfully at the oak-ribbed ceiling.

Events were moving rapidly, and as yet there was no possible means of guessing where they might lead. Of one fact he was quite certain, and that was that his present predicament was no ordinary sordid adventure with an unknown woman. That Mrs. Madden was a lady her voice showed beyond question. That she was married worried David considerably, for like most bachelors he cared little for aged fathers or athletic big brothers, but for irate husbands he had a perfectly well-defined regard, not to say fear.

Two alternatives confronted him. One was to pay for his drink in cash, leave the club, and go back to his hotel, where he could remain under his proper name until his business in Baltimore was completed. The other was to sign a check for his whisky and soda, jump into a taxi, and proceed in all haste to the home of Mrs. Philip Madden. Being a young man not wholly without spirit, and through whose veins the red blood flowed fairly free, he decided on the latter course, and took the taxicab.

It was with no little interest that Daskam gazed from the cab window at the passing rows of houses, as the neighborhood in which Mrs. Madden lived would no doubt largely determine the kind of adventure into which he had been precipitated. Greatly to his relief the beauty, size, even grandeur of the fleeting blocks of residences, increased rather than diminished every

time the meter on the taxicab registered another dime, and he was brought that much nearer to his destination.

As the cab drew up before a charming little brick house flanked on either side by a large brownstone mansion, there could be no doubt that Daskam's escapade was irrevocably intermingled with the *haute monde* of Baltimore.

It was David's first intention to keep the cab, but at second thoughts, he decided that it would be best to cut off all relations with the outside world, and he therefore dismissed the taxi, and with a debonair air—entirely assumed—he jauntily ascended the white marble steps, and with a fairly steady index finger pushed the electric button.

In a few moments the door swung back. A pretty maid received Daskam with a gracious bow and announced that his visit was expected, and that Mrs. Madden was waiting for him in the drawing-room. The maid drew aside the heavy portières, and when David had entered the drawing-room let them fall softly behind him. Save for the glow from the crimson coals of the fireplace there were no lights of any kind, and the newcomer hesitated at the doorway until his eyes should become more accustomed to the almost complete darkness.

Then David heard the soft rustle of a woman's skirt, and was conscious that a figure had taken shape from somewhere in the general direction of the fireplace and was slowly approaching him.

"This is Mr. Cutting?" said the same soothing voice that he had heard over the telephone, and from the Stygian darkness he saw a white hand and arm stretched toward him.

David took the soft, delicate hand in his own, and, perhaps a little moved by the romance of the situation, bowed low—so low that his lips brushed the long, tapering fingers. With her hand still clasped gently in his, the woman



led David slowly across the room until they stood on a great white bearskin that lay before the broad hearth.

Daskam looked steadily at the lovely features of the girl before him, for she was really only a girl. For a few silent moments he feasted his eyes on the delicate oval face, the wonderfully chiseled features, the deep, warm coloring of the soft, fresh skin, the broad forehead crowned by a mass of raven hair that was constantly changing from black to dark-steel blue, and then back again to a black that glistened and sparkled in the glow from the scarlet fire. Her deep blue Irish eyes looked into his own not with the uncontrolled admiration that shone in the man's, but rather as if she were searching the very depths of David's eyes for something that she could not find.

With a little grimace and a smile on her red lips and in her friendly eyes she dropped Daskam's hand.

"You're not a bit as I expected you to be," she pouted, "not at all like the Arthur Cutting I had imagined."

"I'm sorry," said David, and he said it as if he meant it, and, as a matter of fact, he did.

With half-closed eyes, her arms resting easily on her narrow hips, Mrs. Madden slowly looked David over from head to foot.

"You don't look like a big-game hunter or a champion pigeon shot to me," she said. "You look much more like the art collector and bibliophile side of your character."

The expression on David's face was one of keen disappointment, but this was entirely assumed and in no way reflected the unhappy thoughts that were hurtling through his brain. From the days of his childhood he had abhorred and fled from all kinds of firearms, and he had never collected anything but bills. However, as he deemed it best to know the worst at once, Daskam broached the all-impor-

tant subject in his most easy and assuring manner.

"And it is no doubt due to one of these several accomplishments," he asked, "that I owe the honor of your calling upon me at this time?"

"Of course it is," said Mrs. Madden, glancing at him with a most bewitching smile. "You see, your friend, Bob Ritchie, has told us such a lot about you and what a really wonderful person you are. The moment I read in the evening paper that you were stopping at the Bellevue I said, 'He's the very man.' Really, it seems quite providential—quite. Then I remembered that Bob told us when he was dining here the other night that you were coming to town and that he had put you up at the Oriole. When they told me at the hotel that you weren't there, I was quite sure that you'd be loafing about the club at this time in the evening, and—you see, I was right."

Daskam smiled grimly. "It was, indeed, fortunate," he said, "that I dropped into the club at just that moment."

Mrs. Madden wrinkled her forehead and looked at David with a suspicion of grave doubt in her pretty eyes.

"I wonder," she said, and she spoke almost in a whisper, "I wonder if you will think yourself so fortunate when I tell you just what I want you to do."

"Please don't worry," David assured her. "After all, one has a right to expect much of a man who is as famous as a big-game hunter, pigeon shot, and art collector as you say I am."

Mrs. Madden slowly folded her arms, drew her lips into a straight line, raised her delicate eyebrows, and, for a few moments, regarded her guest quizzically—to David it seemed almost with suspicion.

"You're in condition?" she asked. "Your aim is good?"

"Good as it ever was," David admitted.

His hostess crossed the room to an old-fashioned mahogany highboy, and opening one of the drawers took out a revolver, which she brought back to the hearth so that the scarlet glow fell full upon it.

"There it is," she said, handing it to David, "and it's a beauty—no?"

Daskam braced himself for the ordeal, and with a sickly smile, which was intended to convey the ideal of real affection, gazed at the ugly, black, steel thing lying in his open hand. To David it looked just about as attractive as if it had been a live bat. It was a very thick-set revolver with an absurdly short barrel, whose highly burnished surface fairly glittered and shone in the firelight. There could be no question that this was no toy, but a weapon made to destroy. With what Daskam considered his loving glance still fixed on the abhorrent instrument of death, he turned it slowly over on his palm. Then he shook his head and cast a knowing glance in the direction of Mrs. Madden.

"Both sides are alike," he said.

Mrs. Madden turned on him with sudden amazement. "Of course both sides are alike," she snapped. "What did you expect to find on the other side—a vanity-case attachment?"

"No, not exactly," David explained cautiously, at the same time regarding his hostess as if she had been a wayward, willful child. "Not that exactly. I have a revolver very much like this, made by the same people, *and* it has an attachment on the left side. It is precisely the same gun, but of a little more modern make than yours."

Still wondering if the devilish thing were loaded, and still trying unsuccessfully to locate the exact position of the trigger, he handed it back to its owner.

"As you say, Mrs. Madden," he remarked breezily, "a little beauty—a veritable little beauty. And now, if I am not trespassing too far on your good

nature, may I ask you what is to be the target?"

Mrs. Madden placed the revolver back in the drawer, smiled cheerfully at her inquisitive guest, and shook her pretty head in mild disapproval.

"Not so fast," she said. "I'll let you know that in good time. First, I must tell you the cause of all my troubles. Traveled as much as you have, Mr. Cutting, and with your artistic tastes, I suppose you know a good deal about pottery?"

Recalling the two large red earthenware flowerpots then adorning his lawn at his suburban home at Nutley and bearing the legend "Trenton, N. J.—1910," David smiled the knowing, superior smile of the connoisseur and let his answer go at that.

"Then," said Mrs. Madden, "I shall show you a few ceramics that will interest you."

First she turned on an electric switch which flooded the room with a strong, white light, and, then going to a little desk, took out a key from what seemed to David, from where he stood, to be a secret drawer. Beckoning him to follow her, she proceeded to a small glass cabinet that stood between two windows that opened on the street. Carefully turning the key, she opened the door of the cabinet and took out a small, red-and-black cup which she placed in David's open but slightly trembling hands.

"A rather nice example of Pan-Grave—no?" she asked.

"Fine," said David, handling the bowl rather gingerly, "fine."

"I'm just a little proud of this, too," Mrs. Madden said, taking the cup from David and handing him a small bowl. "Early Ionic with the figure of Zeus. Probably came from Cyrene. About six hundred B. C., I should think, wouldn't you?"

David held the bowl in one hand, and slowly rubbed his beardless chin with



the other. "About six hundred, I should think—might be nearer five hundred. When you get back to the B. C.'s, a hundred years more or less doesn't really seem to count very much to me."

In quick succession Mrs. Madden, with delicate, loving fingers, touched several more pieces in the cabinet, describing them as Gombroon, Gaulish, and Corinthian, while David nodded his head gravely and with every sign of intense appreciation.

"And now," she continued, "I come to my greatest treasure and the cause of all my trouble."

With infinite care she removed from the cabinet a fairly large bowl of blue-enamel faience, with figures in relief, and held it up to David's apparently delighted gaze.

"Hellenistic period," she said, "and was made at Alexandria under the Ptolemies. You probably remember the examples in the Egyptian department at the British Museum."

Daskam shook his head. "I'm afraid not," he said. "I guess I must have skipped them somehow."

"Well," ran on Mrs. Madden, fairly carried away by her enthusiasm, "they're larger, but not a bit better than this. I suppose you know their history?"

"I'm afraid if I ever did," David admitted, "I've forgotten it."

"Well, a good example—like this, for instance—is almost priceless. An absurd treasure for people of simple means like ourselves to own, but I came by it almost by accident, and could never bear to part with it, although I have been offered really tremendous sums by museums and private collectors."

"Very, very interesting," said David, gazing steadily at the bowl and trying his best to imagine why anybody should consider it worth more than a dollar at most.

"But as I was saying," continued Mrs. Madden, "we came by it in such

an unusual way that it never seemed right somehow to let it go. As you probably know, there were some very extraordinary imitations made of this pottery in Germany, and so remarkably faithful were they to the original that only the greatest experts can tell the difference. My father, who was a comparatively poor man but a really famous connoisseur, bought this at a sale at Christie's, where the owner had had it catalogued as one of the imitations. You can judge of my father's surprise and delight when it was afterward discovered that it was not an imitation, but an original and one of the best examples in existence."

"Generally happens the other way," said David. "If my old man had bought it, I bet it would have turned out to be cracked or he would have fallen down on his way home and broken the darned thing."

Mrs. Madden was apparently too excited over the recital of her own troubles to notice David's somewhat flippant remarks, and having carefully placed the priceless bowl back in the cabinet, drew a letter from her corsage, and handed it to her guest. This was what David read:

DEAR PHIL: I have decided to accept your offer, although five thousand is a lot to pay for a thing I can't even show my best friends. You'd better come around about six to-morrow afternoon for the imitation, and then you can make the change at the first opportunity. I only hope you won't break your neck with your ill-gotten gains.  
As ever,  
TOMMY.

David handed the note back to Mrs. Madden.

"A cheerful, friendly kind of letter," he said, "but I confess I can't quite follow the meaning of it."

"Of course not," she said, "but if you'll sit in one of those armchairs before the fire, I'll sit in the other and tell you all about it. It's only too plain to me, Mr. Cutting, altogether too plain, I can assure you."

"In the first place," she began, "the man who signs himself 'Tommy' is Thomas Bartow, a rather amusing and interesting individual—a great friend of my husband's, and until very recently I thought he was a good friend of mine, too. Like myself he is also a collector of ceramics. Indeed, it was owing to the fact that I owned the famous Alexandrian bowl and he owned one of the imitations that we first met him. Naturally he was anxious to see my original, but no sooner had he set eyes on it than he was absolutely unhappy because he did not have one, too. As a collector yourself, you must have met with many cases where to own a certain specimen becomes an absolute obsession with a collector."

David nodded his head gravely. "I know," he said, "it's a sort of mental kleptomania. Very sad, very sad."

"I should say it was real kleptomania," ran on Mrs. Madden. "Think of the wonderful things that have been taken by collectors who, on account of the rarity of the stolen specimens, could not possibly dispose of them, and just kept them to gloat over in private. Now this trouble with Tommy Bartow is just such a case. He's not going to actually steal the bowl, but he's going to buy it from my husband for five thousand dollars and replace it with his miserable imitation, and it doesn't belong to my husband. It belongs to me."

"Ah!" said David. "Now I begin to understand what his letter is about. Incidentally, how did *you* come by the letter?"

Mrs. Madden drew up her slim, pretty figure. "That," she said, with a strong suggestion of reprimand in her voice, "is one of those secrets that every woman treasures to herself—one of those secrets that she doesn't even tell her husband."

"Especially her husband," David suggested, and then hastily added: "But how about Mr. Madden? If I may

make so bold, it seems to me that he is equally culpable. Bartow, as I understand it, is a kind of an amiable, idiot collector who wouldn't rob a nickel from a surface railroad, but who cannot resist practically stealing a certain piece of pottery. As I understand it, your husband has not even the same paltry excuse to offer. May I ask what seems to be his particular trouble?"

"My husband," sighed Mrs. Madden, "is an expert accountant, and therefore must of necessity lead a most sedentary life. During business hours he confines himself to rows of innumerable figures and similar unimaginative occupations. This, you must admit, is a rather practical, prosaic, not to say slow way to spend one's time. The result is that when once away from the office, his fancy takes the most extraordinary flights, and speed—I may say immoderate speed—is his only desire. For some time he was content to own a racing car and devote half our income to paying fines to police magistrates for overspeeding. Last summer, however, at Fort Myer, he went up several times in an airship, and ever since then he has been crazy to own a monoplane. The great advantage, he says, that aeroplanes have over automobiles is that you can go at seventy miles an hour and have no fear of bicycle cops."

"True, true," said David gloomily, and, somewhat off his guard, was about to add that a suburban trolley was his idea of perfect speed when Mrs. Madden hurried on.

"It seems that a monoplane costs five thousand dollars, but poor Phil couldn't possibly get hold of that much money legitimately, so he decided to sacrifice my Alexandrian bowl."

"Suppose," asked David, "that he had changed the real bowl for the imitation. Do you mean to say that you would not at once have detected the difference?"



For a moment Mrs. Madden hesitated. "No," she said, "I don't think that I would. Certainly not unless I took it out of the case, and this I do very, very rarely. Probably not more than once a year. No expert living could possibly tell the difference if the bowl were in the case."

"And now," asked David, his mind still busy with thoughts of the evil-looking revolver that she had shown him, "what do you propose doing about it? Do you want me to wing the monoplane?"

Mrs. Madden's pretty lips rippled into what it pleased her to consider a sneer.

"How absurd," she said. "I want you to shoot *him*."

"Him!" cried David. "I shoot your husband?"

"Not to kill," explained Mrs. Madden, her voice dropping to a whisper. "Just shoot at him—wing him. No, not even that—a scratch or a bullet hole through his clothes would be better and serve my purpose just as well. If you winged him he would probably be laid up, and I hate to fool around a sick room, turning pillows every few minutes and talking cheap comedy in a fearful effort to make the patient laugh."

"Do you mean to tell me," asked David, "that I am to shoot your husband so that I only scratch him or make a hole in his clothes?"

"Of course," said Mrs. Madden, smiling pleasantly. "That should be easy enough for a crack shot like Arthur Cutting."

"But what do you want to shoot him for, anyway?" David begged. "Why not tell him that you've found the letter, give him a good calling down, and let it go at that?"

"Not at all," said Mrs. Madden, with much asperity. "I want to teach Phil a lesson that he'll remember all his life. I want to catch him red-handed in the act and scare him so that he'll never

get over it, and I want a witness to his attempted theft. That's why I chose you. I knew that Arthur Cutting was not only a champion shot, but that he was by birth and training a gentleman. I knew that I could always call on you to testify against my husband should I ever have cause to ask you, and that in the meantime I could rely on your discretion never to mention the miserable incident to any one."

"And when," asked David, "when do you expect him?"

"To-night—any time now."

"What makes you think he is coming to-night?"

"I'm sure of it," said Mrs. Madden. "Phil got the letter three days ago, and I saw it only a few hours later and was on my guard at once. I laid awake all night, and never gave him a chance to leave our bedroom. Two nights ago I fell asleep for a moment, and when I awoke he was gone. I followed as fast as I could, and fortunately was just in time to catch him at the door of the dressing room. He explained his absence by saying that he had heard a noise and feared that it might be burglars. Burglars, indeed!"

"Did he have the imitation with him?" David asked.

"He certainly did. I saw him drop it in that big tapestry chair over there, but in the darkness I pretended not to notice it. I think, however, that he suspected something, and so to-night he told me that he was going to a dinner at the club and would not be home until very late, and insisted that I should go to bed. Of course, his idea is to come in after he thinks that I am sound asleep and change the bowls. I left the lights burning in my bedroom because I've no doubt that he's watching outside, and as soon as I've put them out he'll believe that I've gone asleep and enter the house. I think I'll put the lights out now, and then you and I can hide in the dining

room behind those portières and wait for him. Do you think you understand what is expected of you?"

But David's throat was painfully parched; his tongue clung tightly to the roof of his mouth, and before he could make a final protest his hostess had hurried away to turn out the fateful lights in her bedroom. Mrs. Madden remained away but a few moments, but to David it seemed like hours, and he found little solace in her return as she at once took the revolver from the highboy, and, after a loving glance at its gleaming barrel, gave it into his unwilling hands.

"There it is," she said. "And mind you only scratch him. I couldn't possibly stand a long siege in a sick room, and I hate a hospital as I hate—well, as I hate Tommy Bartow."

With these few words of warning she switched off the electric lights, and, with only the aid of the red glow from the fire, led Daskam into the dining room. At the suggestion of Mrs. Madden he lighted a match, and, having found two rather stiff-backed chairs, placed them close to the portières that screened them from the drawing-room.

While the match was still burning, David glanced about the room, and was somewhat relieved to notice that a door leading to the hallway was open. As he knew that the hallway led both to the street door as well as to the stairway to the upper part of the house, he found some consolation in the thought that all means of escape were not yet lost to him.

For some time in complete and absolute darkness, Mrs. Madden and David sat on the two stiff-backed chairs, facing each other. If it had not been for the cold and clammy weapon that David held in his hand, the experience appealed to him as rather like a spiritual séance he had once attended on West Fourteenth Street. On this occasion, mingled with the beating of tambour-

ines and guitars, there had been the reports of a pistol, but at the time David knew perfectly well that spooks used only blank cartridges, and then it was the spirits and not he that did the shooting. Indeed, if there was only one thing that David was quite sure of it was that he would rather be shot at at any time than do the shooting.

Soon after he had taken his stand or rather his chair in the awful darkness of the dining room he had once more started his search for the revolver's trigger. After a few minutes' careful fingering he was rewarded by finding something which, while not like any trigger he had ever met with before, was no doubt a newfangled imitation of that all-important part of a revolver.

Although far from contented with his present position, David breathed a low sigh of relief that the pistol had not completely baffled him, and then settled as far back as he could in his uncomfortable dining-room chair to await the coming of his victim.

He did not have very long to wait, for within perhaps fifteen minutes after he and his hostess had taken their places behind the portières they heard the front door opened and then apparently closed with great caution.

At the first sound, Mrs. Madden carefully pulled aside one of the curtains just far enough for David and herself to see all that was taking place in the drawing-room and yet remain unseen themselves.

By the dim light of the fireplace they watched Madden, carrying what was evidently the famous bowl under his arm, tiptoe his way across the room to the desk, and take the key from the secret drawer.

If David had been inwardly terrified before, he was much more so now that he had had his first glimpse of the man he was supposed to shoot. Madden was short and thickset, with a heavy, pro-



truding jaw and bushy eyebrows, and a glowering expression which to David seemed nothing short of diabolical. So far as he could judge by the dim fire-light, this was no man to scratch or to have bullets put through his clothes. If this evil-looking, marauding husband was to be shot at all it ought to be in a vital spot, because he certainly did not look like a man who would take being used as a target as anything approaching a joke or a reprimand.

For a moment Madden, the key in his hand, hesitated in the center of the room, glanced about him, and then, apparently satisfied that no one was spying on him, with great caution approached the sacred cabinet that held the famous ceramic. Breathlessly Mrs. Madden and David watched him lift the real Alexandrian bowl from its velvet cushion in the glass case and put in its place Bartow's imitation.

At this exact moment and just as Madden was about to close the door of the cabinet there was a distinct sound of footfalls on the floor overhead. Evidently fearing his wife was coming downstairs to greet him, Madden dropped the genuine bowl into the cushions of a big armchair, and then hastily closing the cabinet door, but without waiting to lock it, he walked calmly and with a smile on his ugly face out of the room, prepared to meet his wife on the staircase.

Just as the portières that separated the drawing-room from the hallway closed behind him, Mrs. Madden darted from her hiding place into the drawing-room. In a moment she had picked up the real bowl, restored it to its velvet cushion in the cabinet, and placed the imitation in the chair, where a few seconds before her husband had left the original. Almost before David realized what was taking place she was once more at his side behind the dining-room curtains.

Taking a tight hold on his arm, Mrs.

Madden drew close to him and whispered into his ear:

"That was one of the servants walking upstairs. He thought it was I."

"Good," said David, "and now that you have changed the bowls I won't have to shoot, will I? That was a great idea of yours."

But Mrs. Madden did not seem to care at all for David's suggestion.

"Shoot?" she hissed. "Of course, you've got to shoot. I want to scare him, and I want to scare him good. Look out! Here he comes."

To David's complete chagrin, he could hear the footsteps of Madden cautiously descending the staircase, and then coming along the hardwood hallway. A moment more and he had entered the drawing-room, and, tiptoeing his way over to the armchair where he had left the bowl, carefully picked up what he believed to be the precious ceramic. Cautiously he carried it to the hearth and held it up before the glow of the scarlet coals. The short, stocky figure of the man stood out silhouetted in sharp relief against the shadows of the silent room.

"Ready," whispered Mrs. Madden, and before David could utter a last protest she had seized the cord of the curtains behind which they had been hiding, and with a quick movement shot them back along the brass rod from which they hung.

"Shoot!" she cried. "Shoot!"

Neither at the time, or at any time afterward, could David recall what really happened during the next few moments. He knew that, trembling with terror from head to foot, his right hand fumbled with the weapon of death that he held before him. The lights from the fireplace went out, and complete blackness crowded in on him and stifled him. His mind reeled, and just as the world was about to come to an end he heard a shot ring out with clarion distinctness of a shrill trumpet.

Then, with terrifying clearness and awful rapidity, there followed a flash of lightning, a piercing cry, and a crash of crockery that sounded to David as if a bomb had exploded in a china store.

When he had returned to consciousness he found himself still holding the revolver in his right hand and standing in the exact position where he had been for the last fifteen minutes. The lights in the drawing-room were now, however, all ablaze, and with great difficulty he tried to focus his sight and mind on the scene before him.

As the haze cleared he saw Mrs. Madden and her husband on their knees before the fireplace. So far as he could tell, they were, with great care and with much difficulty, picking up the small pieces of a completely demolished blue-and-white bowl. For the moment the animus that had existed between them seemed to have disappeared, and their whole interest to center in the finding of each new remnant of the ceramic.

"Well," said Mrs. Madden, when the last chip was recovered, "thank goodness it was only the imitation."

"What if it was," Madden growled, "imitations cost money, and we've got to buy another one for Tommy some place."

"I suppose we do," said his wife, and then a sudden and awful thought-seemed to come to her, for David noticed that her pretty face turned white as the bearskin on which she still knelt. "But how did you know that it was the imitation?" she cried. "You thought it was the original."

"Where did you learn all about this deal, anyhow?" demanded Madden.

"I found Tommy's letter in your pocket," Mrs. Madden half cried, half sobbed hysterically.

"Oh, you did, did you?" shouted her husband. "Well, I'll tell you how I know it's the imitation. Because two nights ago—the night you were spying on me and followed me downstairs—I

had changed the bowls just before you saw me. I hid the original until early the next morning. Then I took it to Tommy on my way downtown, but this morning he brought it to the office and said that he couldn't stand the strain of being party to what he called a theft, and brought it back."

"Do you mean to tell me," moaned Mrs. Madden, "that it was the original you just put back in the case?"

"It certainly was," said Madden.

"Then that fool in there," Mrs. Madden sobbed, "did break the original, for I changed them when you left the room for a moment just now."

"Great Heaven!" shouted Madden, and dashed the pieces of the ceramic he had so carefully gathered up into the fireplace. "Who is he anyhow?" he demanded, pulling himself up from his knees and glaring at David, who still stood transfixed in the dining-room doorway. "Who is this gunman," he shouted, "who steals into my home at night to see my wife, and then tries to shoot me up when I come home and surprise him?" And then, turning to his wife, he shook his clenched fists high above his head and cried in impotent rage: "What is he to you, anyhow? Who is he? I demand an explanation from you now, and will get one from that poor, cringing fool later on."

It was quite true that David's attitude might justly have been described as cringing, as, in his highly nervous state, this new charge against him as a home destroyer was almost more than he could bear. Mrs. Madden, however, having once more regained a standing position, promptly came to his rescue.

"It's not his fault," she protested vehemently, "I asked him to do it. He's Arthur Cutting."

"Arthur Cutting!" Madden sneered. "Not Bob Ritchie's Arthur Cutting."

"Of course he is," sobbed Mrs. Madden, again approaching a hysterical condition.



"Not at all like it," said Madden. "I know Ritchie's Arthur Cutting, and he's a big, fine-looking chap—not a thing like that poor worm. Who are you, anyhow?" he shouted at David.

Gathering such courage as he could, and gingerly dropping the revolver on a convenient chair, David slowly advanced toward the center of the room.

"My name," he said, "is David Daskam. By a mere coincidence I was mistaken for Arthur Cutting at the Oriole Club, and went to the phone to answer this lady's call. As it was evidently a call for help, I did what every gentleman would have done, and responded as best I could."

Although his knees were shaking mightily, and a trip hammer was evidently working overtime in his brain in an effort to break the walls of his skull, David stood fairly firm, and, with folded arms and chin erect, returned the glowering glare of the enraged Madden. At this point Mrs. Madden approached her husband, and after some show of peevish reluctance he permitted her to put her arms about his broad shoulders.

"Forgive him, dear," she begged. "Really, he's not to blame. It's all my fault."

"And, furthermore," added David, somewhat recovering his spirit, "I am *not* a gunman."

Madden looked at him, and then glanced at the remnants of the Alexandrian bowl lying in the hearth.

"That," he said, with a smile that smattered somewhat of cynicism, "is perfectly evident, and I withdraw the word. But, as a matter of fact, that doesn't seem to have very much bearing on the main difficulty." And then, turning to his wife: "The real bowl is lost forever, and we've got to find Bartow an imitation. How can we explain the mess to him, anyhow?"

"If you will allow me," said David, "I should like to suggest a remedy, although it may not——"

"All right," said Madden. "Go ahead. Any port in a storm."

"The imitation," began David, "now rests in the cabinet, and Mrs. Madden assures me that the best expert in the world couldn't possibly tell the difference between it and the original so long as it remains in the cabinet. Why not let it remain there? Lock the door and give me the key."

"What would you do with it?" asked Madden.

"I would take it where you nor any one else would ever see it," continued David, unruffled. "To Nutley, New Jersey, where it would be as safe as if I had dropped it into the Sargasso Sea. So far as I can understand the matter, the only real fun you collectors get out of collecting is to own something that the other fellow hasn't got. Why not pretend to the world that this is the real bowl? You two will never tell, and Bartow will never know."

"And you?" asked Mrs. Madden.

"I?" he said. "From to-night my interest in ceramics ceases forever. Sometimes, no doubt, when I am watering the geraniums in the two red flower-pots on my modest lawn at home I shall be reminded of my one experience with ancient pottery, but, believe me, madam, it will only be a memory. As a souvenir will you give me the key?"

Mrs. Madden crossed the room to the cabinet, and, with loving fingers having touched the velvet cushion on which her treasure once stood, locked the door for all time, and, coming back to David, handed him the key.

"For a brave gentleman," she said, and then, with her most charming smile, added, "and a most convincing liar."

"All true gentlemen," replied David, "should surely be both." After which remark he bowed low to his host and hostess, and, dropping the key into his waistcoat pocket, strolled out of the drawing-room and out of the lives of the mad Maddens forever.

# Fortune's Football

By B. M. Bower

*Author of "Flying U Ranch," "The Gringos," Etc.*

B. M. Bower is not only a literary photographer with an eye for the picturesque in the cow country, but a wonderfully wide observer of life and a keen analyst of human emotions. In this novel you have, to begin with, a splendid study of a cantankerous couple well past middle age trekking across the plains in search of an Eden; you have a capable ranch girl, charmingly girlish and retaining her blithe spirit of childhood through the troublous years when she has to take upon her young shoulders the management of the ranch; you have a cowboy who is fond of Browning; and you have the bank clerk who comes to transform Aunt Marthy's ranch—and he does the transforming with a vengeance. These are a few of the people you will meet in this great story. We fell in love with Bower's "Happy Family" years ago, and it is a little disappointing not to meet the old friends again, but these new friends have their own charm, and we know that, with us, you will be glad to widen the circle of your acquaintance.

*(A Four-Part Story—Part One.)*

## CHAPTER I.

### THE TRAIL MAKERS.

FOUR trail-worn oxen, their necks bowed to the yoke of patient servitude, strained at the dust-grimed wagon that had come to a halt with its front wheels hard against a small ledge of lava rock. Perched upon the seat behind them a woman, low-browed, unkempt, and trail-worn also, nagged shrilly at the driver. And the driver, stung to what nearly approached activity, snapped the long-lashed whip over the backs of the wheelers and cursed them with a whining ineffectiveness that rasped the patience of the woman.

She called him a fool with that blunt directness of speech sometimes affected by wives toward their husbands, and

climbed down over the wheel with a grunt for her flabby bulk and with a display of stocky ankles bulging over her shoetops and clothed in coarse woolen stockings her own stubby fingers had knitted. She set her foot down upon a stunted sagebush with decision, turned, and snatched the whip ill-naturedly from her husband. For a minute she looked at him with hard blue eyes which life and the sun had faded almost to gray. Her mouth drew down at the corners with the contempt she felt for his incompetence.

"Git outa the way so I can swing 'em around," she commanded him, scornful because he failed to perceive her purpose. As an incentive she gave him a push with her elbow. "How a man can grow up with as little sense as you got beats me. You expect them



pore critters to root up that ledge just by pullin' at it? I should think you'd look where you're going. I do believe you drive with your eyes shet!"

With stinging whiplash and with strident voice, she induced the oxen to back the wagon and swing to the left to pass the black nose of half-buried rock. "Buck! You, Bawley!" she adjured the leaders then, and the oxen lowered heads and twisted necks under the heavy yoke, obeying the voice that was so frequently followed by the bite of whistling leather. The wagon lurched on, a wheel lifting now and then to pass over sagebush or rock and chugging back again with a jolt into the sandy soil that held deep the imprint of their passing.

Marthy walked stolidly beside the wheelers, guiding the leaders by her voice and whip alone. She was hoarse from thirst and heat and weariness, and her lips were blackened and chapped; she limped perceptibly whenever she stepped upon a rock or set her foot inadvertently upon a dead sage limb. Behind her Jase followed sulkily, his feet dragging through the sand as much from inherent shiftlessness as from trail weariness. He did not speak, nor did Marthy. Like the oxen she drove with the lash hissing admonitorily over their backs, they, too, were yoked together and plodding under the lash of necessity, and sentiment lay dead within them—dead and buried deep under the ashes of burned-out desire for each other. Yet, because they were yoked, they plodded on dumbly, playing their little part in the upbuilding of a nation and in the inscrutable scheme of human life and endeavor.

After a long time of plodding in silence, Marthy stopped the pilgrimage with a harsh command. Whip in hand, she went slowly away to reconnoiter where she had descried what looked like the straight cut of river bluffs in the foreground. The oxen immediately lay

down in the hot sand to rest while they might; and Jase, peering after his departing wife until he was certain of the departure, crawled under the wagon where there was shade if not coolness, and went to sleep.

Marthy's sunbonnet bobbed over a tiny ridge, and out of sight beyond, and the great, empty land drowsed under the heat of a noon sun. The oxen sighed with a great heaving of rough-coated paunches marked prominently by the ribs beneath. Jase opened his eyes, lifted a big-jointed, grimy hand to brush ineffectually at a marauding fly, and raised his head nervously once when the shadow of a hawk slid lazily over the sun-bathed bushes beside the wagon.

After a while Marthy came back, limping painfully from a stone bruise she had received through the break in one of her shoes. She stared down at her slumbering husband, her face bitter with that bitterness which is the portion of a woman who may not lean upon her mate, but must bear his share of the burden and her own besides. But she let him sleep while she climbed into the wagon and drank sparingly from the half-empty water jug there, and lay back upon the roll of bedding to rest for a few minutes before she again took up the whip of authority. She had found the river she sought—and she had found it a mocking, laughing, greenish thing sliding down a cañon, rock-walled and black and forbidding. She might have thrown a stone into it, but to reach it was absolutely impossible; more impossible than if horizontal miles had intervened, rather than perpendicular feet. And that river was the only water she knew of anywhere in that country.

Marthy was discouraged, and she was tired to the point of exhaustion; but, after ten minutes of lying there, and listening to the dull, intermittent snoring of Jase, she climbed stiffly down and

took up the ox whip. Farther up, she had seen a break in the cañon wall, as though some other stream joined the river there; at any rate, she meant to find out.

She roused the oxen and waited impatiently while they lifted hind quarters reluctantly from the sand as the first movement toward rising and taking up their toilsome journey. Jase left off snoring and crawled, also reluctantly, from under the wagon.

"The river's right ahead, but we can't git to it," Marthy announced, turning grudgingly toward him. At least he should share her disappointment. "There's solid rock wall a hundred feet high. Gee, Buck! Bawley!"

The oxen, twisting their necks like a country boy garroted by his first high collar, leaned forward. The wagon, creaking a protest, crushed a pungent young sage or two and went rching on across the uneven soil. Jase followed doglike after, yawning now and then after his nap.

The trail skirted a grim, high bluff grown over with stunted cedars that leaned impotently toward the south, twisting this way and that, but always going forward, up the river gorge.

That slow progress was the highest tribute to Marthy's skill as a driver of oxen. More than once Jase whined his opinion that they were "plumb stuck," and would have to go back. Only once did Marthy answer his admission of defeat. Then she turned upon him with slow anger.

"Go back *where*?" she asked him, memory of the trail they had left behind them supplying her ominous meaning. "Go back for what? We can die here jest as well as anywhere else. You can turn back if you want to; I'm going on."

Jase mumbled over the rock he must pry away from a front wheel and roll down the steel hillside; and Marthy, bracing her shoulder against the lower

side of the wagon to keep it from toppling while she yelled to Buck and Bawley, drew down her chapped lips in scorn of his weakness. With the leadership left to Jase, they would both have been dead long ago, just as their child was dead, back there on the desert.

With the sun hanging upon the hilltop they had passed over, the wagon came quite suddenly upon springy sward still green with vivid greenness of spring—or with an unfailing supply of moisture. Marthy pointed the ox whip with grim gloating. "Yuh want to turn back—*now*?" she asked her husband pointedly.

The oxen began to low rumblingly in their throats with now and then a loud, eager note, and broke into a shuffling trot which taxed Marthy's stride until she also trotted to keep up with them. Jase broke into a shambling run. Twelve hours is a long while to go without water when one is toiling over a desert land in heat and dust. They heard the gurgle of water running over rocks, the music of heaven to those who brave the desert dryness. Above them and all around, the sky suddenly blossomed into the royal colors of a desert sunset. The hills, that had been gray and magnificently forbidding, wrapped themselves in a veil of soft violet haze thrown carelessly over rose crowns. Behind them——

Marthy turned; turned away from the singing stream and the luscious little valley that held it fondly. Thirsty, tired, uncouth, and unkempt; illiterate and harsh though she was, she stood still and gazed at the splendor above the hilltop that had cost her so much heartbreaking effort. Molten gold poured down upon it from a cloud canopy gorgeously purple. Above the golden cascade a great, glowing eye stared unwinkingly through the tumbled mass.

Jase, down on all fours beside the stream, was drinking in great, soughing gulps that could be seen sliding down



past his Adam's apple as one sees the swallows going down the neck of a horse. When he could hold not another drop he lifted his head and looked back. Marthy stood with her hands upon her wide hips, the ox whip trailing upon the ground, staring fixedly into the west.

"Is it Injuns, Marthy?" Jase scrambled up in trepidation, looking to right and left, searching with his eyes for a safe hiding place. "Marthy! D'you see Injuns?"

Marthy turned slowly and stared at him as if she were just waking from heavy slumber. She came to the stream, where the oxen were crowding, knee-deep, the leaders pushed quite across to the other side so that they must contort their bodies if they would hold their eager muzzles well into the cool current.

"Don't be a plum idjit," she advised Jase tartly, and knelt beside the wagon and drank and drank, as though she would never stop. She rose, drew her hand across her wet mouth, glanced appraisingly at the tiny valley, and climbed into the wagon, the whip in her hand. "Git in if you don't want to wade," she invited her husband curtly.

Jase was looking back at the hilltop as she had looked. He was not, however, admiring the sunset. When he climbed into the wagon his face was sallow with fear, although he had seen no living thing back there whence they had come. He glanced surreptitiously at Marthy's face, read nothing but the customary calm of her heavy features, and was vaguely reassured; perhaps Marthy had not seen anything, after all.

"This looks like a good place to live," he began tentatively when they were camped beside a large willow clump, and Marthy was cooking their meager supper.

"That's what the Injuns think—judgin' from the signs," Marthy

quelled, and waved a hand to the right, where the stream curved around a level grassplot of half an acre or so in extent.

Jase looked, and turned sallow again. Blackened circles in the grass spoke eloquently of recent camp fires, and near the stream bare tepee poles stood forlornly braced against one another.

"It's a wonder you don't use what eyes yuh got in your head," Marthy remarked unkindly, and added, with her grim humor: "You can live here if you want to; I'm willin' you should."

Jase did not sleep soundly that night, but Marthy slept heavily, undisturbed, and unfearing.

The eager industry of Jase, next morning, brought that understanding smile of contempt to Marthy's harsh lips—the only smile they seemed to know. She realized perfectly how chicken-hearted was this man to whom she was yoked, and she sat in the shade and rested while he bustled about packing the camp equipment into the wagon and yoking the oxen. Now and then he sent her a pale, uneasy glance of reproach which he would have her read as a silent disapproval of her laziness. But Marthy was not to be fooled; she smiled and sat still until he was ready to go.

Jase would have turned the oxen up the little valley which narrowed presently to a cañon if the testimony of the converging hilltops was believed. But Marthy had no mind to be bottled like that, even though she did not greatly fear the roaming savages who had left dead camp fires to bear witness of their frequent stopping here. As always in the face of emergency or where sound reasoning was required, she took the whip, and with it the leadership.

Up the steep hillside before them she urged the oxen by easy stages and with long rests, with the rear wheels braced against rocks she and Jase placed for that purpose lest the wagon should roll

backward down the hill and make all their effort count for nothing.

All during that still, sunny forenoon they crawled over the upland, and Marthy spoke no word. In silence she ate her chunk of bannock and slice of salt pork at noon. In somber brooding she sat in the wagon afterward and let Jase drive where the way was level. Jase, plodding along beside the front wheel, stole an uneasy glance up at her now and then, emboldened because her eyes stared straight ahead.

"She's thinking about little Minervy ag'in," he mumbled into his beard. "I wisht she wouldn't. I'd ruther have her jawing—it's more naturallike."

## CHAPTER II.

### BY RIGHT OF DISCOVERY.

That afternoon it seemed as though their experience of the day before was to be repeated exactly. As before, they were forced to pick their way down a bluff which was but the arm of a low mountain reaching down to the river. Again they came quite suddenly down into a narrow basin where a tiny stream gurgled over stones. Here the hills closed in higher and steeper, and the level bottom was but a tiny place fringed with young alders. There was grass for the tired oxen, however, and they camped with dull satisfaction in the alder shade.

When the sky reddened with dawn Marthy rose and bent to the stream for a perfunctory washing of her face and hands. Her hair hung in wiry wisps upon her neck, but she did not brush it except with her palms. The glow in the sky flamed brighter; and Marthy stood, a slatternly figure, beside the stream, to watch it until the sun peered over the rim of the world straight into her eyes. Day was come again, and Marthy faced it as intrepidly as ever she had faced the others.

"Jase, you get up and after them oxen!" she commanded harshly, and began gathering dry twigs for the breakfast fire. "No telling how fur we'll have to go to-day, nor how hard the goin'll be."

Jase crept out into the sunlight, and brought Abe and Spot down from the tiny grassplot above, where they had been chewing their cud luxuriously while the scant dew dried upon their haunches. Buck and Bawley he could not find anywhere; and, though he suspected that he knew in which direction they had wandered, he did not say a word beyond announcing their absence. He did not like the look of that gorge, even with the sun shining a little way down it. He thought those jutting ledges would be fine hiding places for Indians—and so he stood helplessly by the camp fire Marthy had started, and waited for her to take the initiative.

"I s'pose," she observed crossly, "I'll have to find 'em if we ever expect to git started again. You watch this meat—and see if you can keep it from burning black. It does seem as if you oughta be good fer *something*—but I ain't found out yet what it is."

Marthy went laboriously down the gorge, following the plain trail of the cattle.

After an hour of more or less anxious waiting, Jase ate a little more than his share of the breakfast. Then he pulled his old Springfield rifle out of the wagon and sat with it lying across his knees, his back to a rock. It was two hours before Marthy returned, and by that time Jase's nerves were jumpy.

"W-whar yuh bin so long?" he asked petulantly. "Didn't you find the oxen?"

Marthy's eyes were not quite so hard as she stood looking down at him. "Of course, I found 'em. I always find what I hunt fer, don't I?—and I found something else that I had been looking fer."

Jase's deprecating gaze rested upon her with languid curiosity; he was slip-



ping down into his habitual apathy after the tension of the past two hours, and his strongest desire was for peace and inaction. He hoped the gleam in Marthy's eyes did not mean any hurried departure from their comfortable little camp.

Marthy eyed him expectantly, and when his gaze shifted and lost its meager interest in her venture, she made an impatient movement away from him.

"A hull lot you care fer anything but eatin' and sleepin'!" she complained. "We could keep a-goin' and a-goin' like tramps, and it wouldn't matter a mite to you, jest so's your stomach was full and you had a place to lay down. Jase Meilke, you git up from there, and start taking the wagon apart. I've found the place where we're goin' to live and make a home. It's down that gorge. I don't believe even the Injuns has ever bin down in there; I couldn't find no signs of any camp, and you'd think they would stick to a place like that if they ever was there and saw what it's like. You git things ready to pack on Abe and Spot, while I eat something. We can't drive down till we git a road made—and I dunno as I care whether we have one or not. A couple of rocks rolled down in one place will keep the cattle in—you wait till you see it!" Even a Marthy must relax and become humanly enthused when she stumbles upon that which her soul has long desired.

Jase got up, stood a minute looking at her dumbly, and went over to the wagon almost quickly. It was not Marthy's news which stirred him to brisk action; it was Marthy herself, talking while she ate cold fried pork and bannock and drank cold coffee without a murmur; Marthy, with a flush in her weather-seamed face and a light in her hard blue eyes, who forgot to upbraid his neglect while she planned aloud the home they would build down there in that mysterious place beyond

the gorge—the place which she was calling "the Cove" for want of a better title.

"D'yuh look good for Injun signs, Marthy?" Jase ventured to ask her during a pause while she filled her tin cup again with muddy coffee. And Marthy, glancing at him almost as if he were a real human being, did not deliver the snub matrimonial as was her habit.

"Why, Jase, I don't believe an Injun's ever been down that gorge!" she assured him cheerfully. "You wait till you see it. It—it just lays there like ——" Marthy groped for words to express the thought that had filled her with a dumb exaltation since first she had discovered her Land of Desire. "Jase, it's just like it was the Garden of Eden, kinda, and you and me was Adam and Eve. It's different, uh course," she qualified hastily, impelled by her dominant trait which was practicality, "I ain't Eve, and you ain't Adam, and there ain't no fruit trees—nor no God!" she added with a flash of bitterness for what lay behind her on the trail. A pitiful little grave, if you want to know; a grave in a gray desert, with rocks piled upon it to guard what lay within.

Ashamed at her self-betrayal, she glanced uneasily at Jase, and took a last long swallow of the bitter stuff in her cup. "There's snakes," she informed him dryly, filling out the comparison in the manner of one who would be perfectly just. "I mighty near stepped on a rattler, and I heard another one buzzin' in the rocks. But it's—well, it's like as if that place was made fer us and was jest a-waitin' fer us to come and settle down. We could go and keep a-goin', and we never'd run acrost any other place like that Cove down there. Wait a minute, Jase; I'll help yuh lift that box out. It's goin' to be an awful job to git our things down in there, but——"

It was an awful job, as Marthy pre-

dicted. It was a job that took three days in the accomplishment, and gave Jase a "crick" in his side which was a gold mine of excuses and complaints for months after. It was a job that needed an Eden to make the effort worth while, but Marthy's enthusiasm held firm, her energy never failed her. She drove Jase to the work, just as she drove the reluctant, laden oxen down the rock-filled gorge.

She stood triumphant, one gorgeous sunset, in the midst of her possessions, and looked down over her Eden, exalted with that feeling of possession which is so dear to the soul of man. The Cove was hers. She had found it and she would keep it. She raised her heavy face, and looked pridefully at the towering rock wall which shut off the world. Save that narrow gorge down which she had come, there was no way into the Cove—unless one jumped from the top of that sheer wall of lava rock, which would after all be a means of entering, not the Cove, but the great Unknown. No, that gorge was the only path; Marthy knew, for she had traversed every foot of its boundaries. She knew every turn of the river, every jagged bend in the bluff. She knew that the river was deep and swift, with whirlpools and rapids so that not even a boat might safely venture upon it, and that the rock-rimmed bluff was high and steep, with no break anywhere to the place where it closed in upon the river and helped the opposite bluff to form a cañon through which the river hurried as if it feared the menace of those overhanging ledges.

The Cove was not very wide—perhaps half a mile was the average width along its middle. Like the half of a huge platter split lengthwise, it lay sheltered and sunny down there by the river. The grass was high and matted in its luxuriance, and for the most part green while the surrounding country was baked brown in the July heat.

There were high, shady cottonwoods growing along the river, and at the mouth of the gulch was a jungle of chokecherries and service berries and hawthorns. A calm little desert Eden, filled with the twittering of birds and the gurgle of the river; waiting for its Adam and Eve. And if when they came and claimed their heritage they were but a plodding, unimaginative, uncouth Adam and Eve, that was merely another whim of fate, perhaps.

Marthy was an extremely industrious Eve, and her plans were intensely practical. She had been making a pilgrimage, with a home of her own for the Mecca. She went prepared to build that home upon a solid foundation. She had seeds of fruits and grains and vegetables; seeds of flowers, too, though one might never guess it from her appearance. That vague adoration of the beautiful which would hold her silent in the trail to watch a sunset, had made her treasure the seed of every flower she knew. These she planted when the earth grew moist and warm around the log cabin where they spent the winter.

There had been a long, tiresome trip back to the nearest settlement after a cabin had been built in the Cove, and the oxen had been traded for two mares and a cow, and supplies had been brought back with much toil. (All of which would make a superfluous chapter so far as this story is concerned, but one that would swing open the door of memory in the mind of many a pioneer.) What is more to the point, however, was the bundle of fruit cuttings which Marthy had managed to obtain somewhere, and which she tended as carefully as if they had been her baby—her baby whose grave she passed on the trail. You would not think that a woman with a face like Marthy's—harsh, lined with bad temper and recriminations, and made more bleak and forbidding by those unpleasant eyes of hers—would nurse geranium slips and



begonias and currant cuttings and apples and peaches and things like that; but she did.

You know Marthy by this time. You know how she overcame the rocks and the hills and the heat of the trail. Picture her working just as indefatigably in the Cove, making of it a home for herself—and for Jase, of course, although she put herself first in her home-building as in everything else. Remember her dumb worship of beauty, and give her twenty or thirty years in which to produce the result. There we shall have the Cove, tamed and taught and made a beauty spot in that wild land.

### \* CHAPTER III.

#### MEET BILLY LOUISE.

Through the years Marthy kept on working, and so far as was possible she kept Jase working too. She did not soften, except toward Billy Louise, a merry-eyed little girl who rode over from her father's ranch on the Wolverine to the flowery delights of the Wolverine. Marthy saw in Billy Louise something of the never-to-be-forgotten Minervy, and her heart warmed to the child.

On her thirteenth birthday Billy Louise rode over with a loaf of bread she had baked all by herself, and she put this problem to Marthy:

"I've been thinking I'd go ahead and be the Louise of me, and write poetry, Marthy—a whole book of it with pictures. But I do love to make bread—and people have to eat bread. Which would you be, Marthy; a poet, or a cook?"

Marthy looked at her a minute, lent her attention briefly to the question, and gave what she considered good advice.

"You learn how to cook, Billy Louise. Yuh don't want to go and get notions. Your maw ain't healthy, and

your paw likes good grub. Po'try is all foolishness; there ain't any money in it."

"Walter Scott paid his debts writing poetry," said Billy Louise argumentatively. She had just read all about Walter Scott in a magazine which a passing cowboy had given her; perhaps that had something to do with her new ambition.

"Mebby he did and mebbly he didn't. I'd like to see *our* debts paid off with po'try. I'd have to be worth a hull lot more'n what I'd give for it."

"Oh! Have you got debts, too, Marthy?" Billy Louise at thirteen was still ready with sympathy. "Daddy's got lots and piles of 'em. He bought some cattle and now he talks to mommie all the time about debts. Mommie wants me to go to Boise to school, next winter, to Aunt Sarah's. And daddy says there's debts to pay. I didn't know you had any, Marthy."

"Well, I have got. We bought some cattle, too—and they ain't done's well's they might. If I had a man that was any good on earth I could put up more hay. But I can't git nothing outa Jase but whines. Your paw oughta send you to school, Billy Louise, even if he has got debts. I'd 'a' sent——"

She stopped there, but Billy Louise knew how she finished the sentence mentally. She would have sent Minervy to school.

"Your paw ain't got any right to keep you outa school," Marthy went on aggressively. "Debts er no debts, he'd see't you got schoolin'—if he was the right kinda man."

"Daddy is the right kinda man. He ain't like Jase. He says he wishes he could, but he don't know where the money's coming from."

"How much's it goin' to take?" asked Marthy heavily.

"Oh, piles." Billy Louise spoke airily to hide her pride in the importance of the subject. "Fifty dollars, I guess.

I've got to have some new clothes, mommie says. I'd like a blue dress."

"And your paw can't raise fifty dollars?" Marthy's tone was plainly beligerent.

"Got to pay interest," said Billy Louise importantly.

Marthy said not another word about debts or the duties of parents. What she did was more to the point, however. For she hitched the mules to a rattly old buckboard next day, and drove over to the MacDonald ranch on the Wolverine. She carried fifty dollars in her pocket—and that was practically all the money Marthy possessed, and had been saved for the debts that harassed her. She gave the money to Billy Louise's mother, and said that it was a present for Billy Louise, and meant for "school money." She said that she hadn't any girl of her own to spend the money on, and that Billy Louise was a good girl and a smart girl, and she wanted to do a little something toward her schooling.

A woman will sacrifice more pride than you would believe, if she sees a way toward helping her children to an education. Mrs. MacDonald took the money, and she promised secrecy—with a feeling of relief that Marthy wished it. She was astonished to find that Marthy had any feelings not directly connected with work or the shortcomings of Jase, but she never suspected that Marthy had made any sacrifice for Billy Louise.

So Billy Louise went away to school and never knew whose money had made it possible to go, and Marthy worked harder and drove Jase more relentlessly to make up that fifty dollars. She never mentioned the matter to any one. The next year it was the same; when, in August, she questioned Billy Louise clumsily upon the subject of finances, and learned that "daddy" still talked about debts and interest, and didn't know where the money was coming from, she drove over again with

money for the schooling. And again she extracted a promise of silence.

She did this for four years, and not a soul knew that it cost her anything in the way of extra work and extra harassment of mind.

At eighteen, then, Billy Louise knew something not taught by the wide plains and the wild hills around her. She was not spoiled by her little learning, which was a good thing. And when her father died tragically beneath an overturned load of poles from the mountain at the head of the cañon, Billy Louise came home. The Billy of her tried to take his place, and the Louise of her to take care of her mother, who was unfitted both by nature and habit to take care of herself. Which was, after all, a rather big thing for any one ever to attempt.

Jase began to complain of having "all-gone" feelings during the winter after Billy Louise came home and took up the whole burden of the Wolverine Ranch. He complained to Billy Louise, when she rode over one clear, sunny day in January; he said that he was getting old—which was perfectly true—and that he was not as able-bodied as he might be, and didn't expect to last much longer. Billy Louise spoke of it to Marthy, and Marthy snorted.

"He's able-bodied enough at meal-times, I notice," she retorted. "I've heard that tune ever since I knowed him; he can't fool me!"

"But, Marthy, haven't you noticed he doesn't look as well as he used to? He has a sort of *gray* look, don't you think? And his eyes are so puffy underneath, lately."

"No, I ain't noticed nothing wrong with him that ain't always been wrong." Marthy spoke grudgingly, as if she resented even the possibility of Jase's having a real ailment. "He's feelin' his years, mebby. But he ain't no call to—Jase ain't but three years older'n I be, and I ain't but fifty-nine last birthday.



And I've worked and slaved here in this Cove fer twenty-seven years, now; what it is, I've made it. Jase ain't ever done a hand's turn that he wasn't obliged to do."

Jase maundered in at that moment, and Marthy turned and glared at him with what Billy Louise considered a perfectly uncalled-for animosity. In reality, Marthy was covertly looking for visible symptoms of the all-goneness. She shut her harsh lips together tightly at what she saw; Jase certainly was puffy under his watery, pink-rimmed eyes, and the withered cheeks above his thin, graying beard really did have a pasty, gray look.

"D'you turn them calves out into the corral?" she demanded, her voice harder because of her secret uneasiness.

"I was goin' to, but the wind's changed into the north, 'n' I thought mebby you wouldn't want 'em out." Jase turned back aimlessly to the door. His voice was getting cracked and husky, and the deprecating note dominated pathetically all that he said. "You'll have to face the wind goin' home," he said to Billy Louise. "More'n likely you'll be facin' snow, too. Looks bad, off that way."

"You go awn and turn them calves out!" Marthy commanded him harshly. "Billy Louise ain't goin' home if it storms—I sh'd think you'd know enough to know that."

"Oh, but I'll have to go, anyway," the girl interrupted. "Mommie can't be there alone—she'd worry herself to death if I didn't show up by dark. She worries about every little thing since daddy died. I ought to have gone before—or I oughtn't to have come. But she was worrying about you, Marthy; she hadn't seen or heard of you for a month, and she was afraid you might be sick or something. Why don't you get some one to stay with you? I think you ought to——" She looked toward

the door, which Jase had closed upon his departure. "If Jase should—get sick, or anything——"

"Jase ain't goin' to git sick," Marthy retorted glumly. "You don't want to let him worry yuh, Billy Louise. If I'd worried every time he yowled around about being sick, I'd be dead or crazy by now. I dunno but maybe I'll have somebody to help with the work, though," she added. "I got a nephew that wants to come out. He's been in a bank, but he's quit and wants to git onto a ranch. I dunno but I'll have him come, in the spring."

"Do," urged Billy Louise, perfectly unconscious of the potentialities of the future. "I hate to think of you two down here alone."

She ran down the twisted path fringed with long, reaching fingers of the bare berry bushes. At the stable she stopped for an aimless dialogue with Jase, and then rode away, past the orchard whose leafless branches gave glimpses of the low, sod-roofed cabin, with Marthy standing rather disconsolately on the rough doorstep watching her go. They were a lonely couple, growing old down there in the Cove with nothing much to sweeten life for them or make it worth while. Billy Louise, as she rode out of sight in the meadow from which the gorge led to the outer world above, wondered how people could ever sink to that dull monotony of life. Beyond their Cove walls not even their thoughts strayed often or far; not a single ambition leavened their days.

Billy Louise had plenty of ambitions; almost as many as she had dreamed over when she was younger and knew less of the restrictions of one's environment. Running the ranch, and running it successfully, was the latest one placed squarely before her by life itself. She went slowly up the narrow, rocky trail through the gorge, filled

somehow with a fresh zeal for the undertaking.

Absently she let down the bars in the narrowest place in the gorge, and lifted them into their rude sockets after she had led her horse through. She wished she had been Marthy, discovering that place and taming it, little by little, in solitary achievement the sweeter because it had been hard.

"It's a bigger thing," said Billy Louise aloud to her horse, "to make a home here in this wilderness than to write the greatest poem or paint the greatest picture or—anything. I wish that—"

Blue was climbing steadily out of the gorge, twitching an ear backward with flattering attention when his lady spoke.

A few steps farther, and Blue stopped short in the trail. Billy Louise could see the nervous twitchings of his muscles under the skin of neck and shoulders, and she smiled to herself. Nothing could ever come upon her unaware when she rode alone, so long as she rode Blue. A hunting dog was not more keenly alive to his surroundings.

"Go on, Blue," she commanded after a minute. "If it's a bear or anything like that, you can make a run for it; if it's a wolf I'll shoot it. You needn't stand here all night, anyway."

Blue went on, out from behind the willow growth that hid the open. He returned to his calm, picking a smooth trail through the scattered rocks and tiny washouts. It was the girl's turn to stare and speculate. She did not know this horseman who sat negligently in the saddle and looked up at the cedar-grown bluff beyond, while his horse drank, knee-deep in the little stream. She did not know him; and there were not so many travelers in the land that strangers were a matter of indifference.

Blue welcomed the horse with a democratic nicker and went forward briskly. And the rider turned his head,

eyed the girl sharply as she came up, and nodded a cursory greeting. His horse lifted its head to look, decided that it wanted another swallow or two, and lowered its muzzle again to the water.

Billy Louise felt a little heat wave of embarrassment. She was always shy with strangers, and from the way this man's horse was standing, he was going her way—six miles across bleak upland, with never so much as a fence to lend an atmosphere of human occupancy. She could not form any opinion of this man's age or personality, for he was incased in a wolfskin coat which covered him completely from hat brim to ankles. She got an impression of a thin, dark face, and a sharp glance from eyes that seemed dark also. There was a thin, high nose, and beyond that Billy Louise did not look. If she had, the mouth must certainly have reassured her somewhat.

Blue stepped nonchalantly down into the stream beside the strange horse, and went across without stopping to drink. The strange horse moved on also, as if that were the natural thing to do—which it was. Billy Louise set her teeth together with a queer little vicious click that had always been her habit when she felt thwarted and constrained to yield to circumstances, and straightened herself in the saddle.

"Looks like a storm," the fur-coated one observed, with a perfectly transparent attempt to lighten the awkwardness.

Billy Louise yielded to the tone to the extent that she tilted her chin upward and gazed at the gray sweep of clouds moving sullenly toward the mountains at her back. She glanced at the man, and caught him staring at her face with that intent look which was part curiosity, and the rest emotions jealously hidden.

He did not look away immediately, as he should have done, and Billy Louise felt again that little heat wave



of embarrassment, emphasized this time by resentment.

"Are you going far?" he queried in the same tone he had employed before.

"Six miles," she answered shortly, though she tried to be decently civil.

"I've about eighteen," he said. "Looks like we'll both get caught out in a blizzard."

Certainly, he had a pleasant enough voice—and, after all, it was not his fault that he happened to be at the crossing when she rode out of the gorge. Billy Louise, in common justice, laid aside her resentment, and looked at him with a hint of a smile at the corners of her lips.

"That's what we have to expect when we travel in this country in the winter," she replied. "Eighteen miles will take you away after dark."

"Well, I was sort of figuring on putting up at some ranch, if it got too bad. There's a ranch somewhere ahead, on the Wolverine, isn't there?"

"Yes." Billy Louise bit her lips; but hospitality is an unwritten law of the West—a law not to be lightly broken. "That's where I live. We'll be glad to have you stop there, of course."

The stranger must have felt and admired the unconscious dignity of her tone and words, for he thanked her simply, and refrained from looking too intently at her face.

"You better put this coat on," he said. "It's getting pretty cold."

"I hate being bundled. I'm dressed warm enough for any weather," said Billy Louise. And since they had by then reached the top of the hill, she twitched the reins and sent Blue on at the shuffling trail trot which the true range cayuse learns on long journeyings as the gait that covers the most miles with the least effort.

"You've come a long ways, haven't you?" she said, looking at his horse.

"Yes——" and that was all.

Fine siftings of snow, like meal flung

down from a gigantic sieve, swept into their faces as they rode on. The man turned his face toward her after a long silence. She was riding with bowed head and face half turned from him and the wind alike.

"You better ride on ahead and get in out of this," he said curtly. "Your horse is fresh. It's going to be worse and more of it, before long; this cayuse of mine has had thirty miles or so of rough going."

"And you were going to ride him another eighteen? I'll go on and have supper ready." Billy Louise loosened the reins, and Blue broke into an eager gallop.

A half mile she went at a swinging gallop that carried her far ahead of the man; then she looked back, debated with herself while she held the horse to an impatient, prancing walk, and finally stopped him entirely and looked back. The snow was sifting down faster and faster, whitening the wrinkles of the upland and making a blur of the distance. A nasty, deceptive sort of light that was almost worse than darkness. Billy Louise held Blue circling there in the trail until the man came jogging up out of the white dusk, his figure indistinct in the shifting snowfall. He did not see her till she swung alongside him.

"I thought I'd better wait for you," she said primly. "There are bad places where the trail goes close to the bluff, and the lava rock will be slippery with this snow. And it's getting dark so fast that a stranger might go over."

"If that's the case, the sooner you are past the bad places the better. I'm all right. You drift along."

Billy Louise speculated briefly upon the note of calm authority in his voice. He did not know, evidently, that she was more accustomed to giving commands than to obeying them; her lips gave a little quirk of amusement at his mistake.

"You go on. I don't want a guide." He tilted his head peremptorily toward the blurred trail ahead.

Billy Louise laughed a little. She did not feel in the least embarrassed now. "Do you never get what you don't want?" she asked him mildly. "I'd a lot rather lead you past those places than have you go over the edge," she said pleasantly. "Because nobody could get you up, or even go down and bury you decently. It wouldn't be a bit nice. It's much simpler to keep you on top."

He said something, but Billy Louise could not hear what it was; she suspected him of swearing. She rode on in silence.

"Blue's a dandy horse on bad trails, and in the dark," she observed companionably at last. "He simply *can't* lose his footing, or his way."

"Yes? That's nice."

Billy Louise felt like putting out her tongue at him for the cool remoteness of his tone. It would serve him right to ride on and let him break his neck over the bluff if he wanted to. She shut her teeth together and turned her face away from him.

So, in silence and with no very good feeling between them, they went precariously down the steep hill—the hill up which Marthy and the oxen and Jase had toiled so laboriously, twenty-seven years before—and across the tiny flat to where the cabin window winked a welcome at them through the storm.

#### CHAPTER IV.

##### A BOOK, A BANNOCK, AND A BED.

Blue led the way straight to the low, dirt-roofed stable of logs, and stopped with his nose against the closed door. Billy Louise herself was deceived by the whirl of snow and would have missed the stable entirely if the leadership had been hers. She patted Blue gratefully on the shoulder when she

unsaddled him. She groped with her fingers for the wooden peg in the wall where the saddle should hang, failed to find it, and so laid the saddle down against the logs, and covered it with the blanket.

"Just turn your horse in loose," she directed the man shortly. "Blue won't fight, and I think the rest of the horses are in the other part. And come on to the house."

It pleased her a little to see that he obeyed her without protest; she was not so pleased at his silence, and she led the way rather indignantly toward the winking eye which was the cabin's window.

At the sound of their feet on the wide doorstep, her mother pulled open the door and stood fair in the light, looking out with the anxious look which had lived so long in her face that it had lines of its own chiseled deep in her forehead and at the sides of her mouth.

"Is that you, Billy Louise? Oh, is that Peter Howling Dog with you? Oh—it ain't. Where is he? Did you see him? What makes you so terrible late, Billy Louise? Come in, stranger. I don't know your name, but I don't need to know it. A storm like this is all the interduction a fellow needs, I guess." She smiled, at that. She had a nice smile, with a little resemblance to Billy Louise, except that the worried, inquiring look never left her eyes.

"What about Peter?" asked Billy Louise, winnowing her mother's questions down to the single kernel of interest. "Isn't he here?"

"No, and he ain't been since an hour or so after you left. He saddled up and rode off down the river—to the reservation, I reckon. I shouldn't wonder——"

"Then the chores aren't done, I suppose." Billy Louise went over and took a lantern down from its nail, turning up the wick so that she could light



it with the candle. "Go up to the fire, and thaw out," she invited the man. "We'll have supper in a few minutes."

Instead, he reached out and took the lantern from her as soon as she had lighted it. "You go to the fire yourself," he said. "I'll do what's necessary outside."

"Why-y——" Billy Louise, her fingers still clinging to the lantern, looked up at him. He was staring down at her with that intent look she had objected to on the trail, but she saw his mouth now, and the little smile that hid just back of his lips. She smiled back without knowing it. "I'll have to go along, anyway. There are cows to milk, and you couldn't find the cow stable alone."

"Think not?"

Billy Louise had been perfectly furious at that tone, out on the trail. Now that she could see his lips and their little twitching to keep back the smile, she did not mind the tone at all.

Together they went out again into the storm. Billy Louise showed him where were the pitchfork and the hay, and then did the milking while he piled full the mangers. After that they went together and turned the shivering work horses into the stable from the corral where they huddled, rumps to the storm; and the man lifted great forkfuls of hay and carried it into their stalls while Billy Louise held the lantern high over her head like a western Liberty. They did not talk much, except when there was need for speech; but they were beginning to feel a little glow of companionship by the time they were ready to fight their way against the blizzard to the house,

"Did you get everything done? You must be half froze—and starved into the bargain." Mrs. MacDonald, as is the way of some women who know the weight of isolation, had a habit of talking with a nervous haste at times, and of relapsing into long, brooding silences afterward. She asked after Marthy and

Jase, and gave Billy Louise no opportunity to tell her anything.

Billy Louise glanced often at the man, who did not look in the least as she had fancied, except that he really did have a high nose and terribly keen eyes with something behind the keenness that baffled her. And his mouth was pleasant, especially when that smile hid just behind his lips; also, she liked his hair, which was thick and brown, with hints of red in it here and there, and a strong inclination to curl where it was longest. She had known he was tall when he stepped into the light of the door; now she saw that he was slim to the point of leanness, with square shoulders and a nervous quickness when he moved.

"I didn't quite catch your name, mister," Mrs. MacDonald said finally. "But take another biscuit, anyway."

"Warren is my name," returned the man. "Ward Warren. I've got a claim over on Mill Creek."

Billy Louise gave a little gasp and distractedly poured two spoons of sugar in her tea, although she hated it sweetened.

Long ago, when Billy Louise was twelve or so, and lived largely in a dream world of her own, she had one day chanced upon a paragraph in a paper that had come from town wrapped around a package of matches. It was all about Ward Warren. The name caught her fancy, and the text of the paragraph seized upon her imagination. Until school filled her mind with other things she had built adventures without end in which Ward Warren was the central figure. And now here he was in the flesh!

The lips of Billy Louise smiled and stopped just short of laughter, as she looked across at Ward Warren. She found him looking straight at her in that intent fashion that seemed as if he would see through and all around her and her thoughts. His mouth was

pulled into a certain bitter understanding; indeed, he looked exactly as if Billy Louise had dealt him a deliberate affront which he could neither parry nor fling back at her, but must endure with what stoicism he might.

Billy Louise blushed guiltily, took an unpremeditated swallow of tea, and grimaced over the sickish sweetness of it. She got up and emptied the tea into the slop bucket, and loitered over the refilling of the cup so that when she returned to the table she was at least outwardly calm.

"Jase has got all-gone feelings now, mommie," she remarked irrelevantly during a brief pause, and relapsed into silence again. She knew that was good for at least five minutes of straight monologue, with her mother in that talking mood. She finished her supper while Warren listened abstractedly to a complete biography of the Meilkes, and learned all about Marthy's energy and Jase's shiftlessness.

"Ward Warren!" Billy Louise was saying to herself. "Did you ever in your life! There couldn't possibly be two Ward Warrens; it's such a queer name. Well!" Then she recalled the dream romances in which he had played the hero—and startled herself and the others by suddenly laughing out loud at the memory of one time when Ward Warren had killed enough Indians to fill a deep washout so that he might carry her across to the other side!

"Is there anything funny about Jase Meilke dying, Billy Louise?" her mother asked her in a perfectly shocked tone.

"No—I was thinking of something else." She glanced at the man eying her so distrustfully from across the table, and gurgled again. It was terribly silly, but she simply could not help seeing Ward Warren calmly filling the washout with dead Indians so that he might carry her across it in his arms. The more she tried to forget that, the

funnier it became. She ended by leaving the table and retiring precipitately to her own tiny room in the lean-to, and burying her face as deep as it would go in a puffy pillow of wild duck feathers.

He, poor devil, could not be expected to know just what had amused her so. He did know that it somehow concerned himself, however. He took up his position—mentally—behind the wall of aloofness which stood between himself and an unfriendly world, and when Billy Louise came out later to help with the dishes, he was sitting absorbed in a book.

Billy Louise got out her algebra and a slate and began to ponder the problem of a much-handicapped goat's feeding ground. Ward Warren read and read and read, and never looked up from the pages. Billy Louise let her slate, with the goat problem unsolved, lie in her lap while she watched him. When she finally became curious enough to decipher the name of the book—she had three or four in that dull, brown binding—and saw that he was reading "The Ring and the Book," she felt stunned. She read Browning just as she drank sage tea; it was supposed to be good for her. Her English teacher had given her that book, is how she happened to own it. She never would have believed that any living human could read it as Ward Warren was reading it now; avidly, absorbedly, lost to his surroundings—to her own presence, if you please!

The next morning the blizzard raged so that there was no argument whatever about the unwisdom of continuing his journey. He stayed as a matter of course. Peter Howling Dog had not returned, either, which was a more powerful reason for staying than was the storm.

Warren did the chores and would not let Billy Louise help with anything. He filled the wood box, piled great chunks of wood by the fireplace, and



saw that the water pails were full to the icy brims. He talked a little, and Billy Louise discovered that he was quick to see a joke, and that he simply could not be caught napping, but had always a retort ready for her.

That was true until after dinner, when he picked up a book again. When that happened, he was dead to the world bounded by the coulee walls, and he did not show any symptoms of consciousness until he had reached the last page, just when the light was growing dim and blurred the lines so that he must hold the pages within six inches of his eyes. He closed the book with a long breath, placed it accurately upon the shelf where it had stood since Billy Louise came home from school, and picked up his hat and gloves. It was time to wade out through the snow and feed the stock, and bring in more wood.

"Some one has been doing a little mending, I see," he said, eying his gloves sharply. He looked at Billy Louise inquiringly. "Is sewing down on the list of your many accomplishments?" he asked, with the smile behind his lips.

"Mommie did that last night, right before your eyes!" she retorted accusingly.

"Mommie's a jewel. I sure appreciate getting my thumbs in out of the cold. Many thanks." He glanced casually toward Mrs. MacDonald, and went out before she could reply.

"I wish we could get him to stay all winter, instead of that Peter Howling Dog," she said anxiously. "I just know Peter's off drinking. I don't think he's a safe man to have around, Billy Louise. I didn't when you hired him. I haven't felt easy a minute with him on the place. I wish you'd hire Mr. Warren, Billy Louise. He's nice and quiet——"

"And he's got a ranch of his own. He doesn't strike me as a man who wants a job milking two cows and carrying slop to the pigs, mommie."

"Well, I'd feel a lot easier if we had him instead of that breed—only we ain't even *got* the breed, half the time. This is the third time he's disappeared, in the two months we've had him. I really think you ought to speak to Mr. Warren, Billy Louise."

"Speak to him yourself, mommie. Only Ward Warren isn't——"

Ward Warren pushed open the door, and looked from one to the other, his eyes two question marks. "Isn't—what?" he asked, and shut the door behind him with the air of one who is ready for anything.

"Isn't the kind of man who wants to hire out to do chores." Billy Louise finished, and looked at him straight. "Are you? Mommie wants to hire you."

"Oh! Well, I was just about to ask you for the job, anyway." He laughed and the distrust left his eyes. "As a matter of fact, I was going over to Jim Larson's to hang out for the rest of the winter and get away from the lonesomeness of the hills. I'd go crazy if I tried to stay up there till spring, and the old Turk's a pretty good friend of mine. But it looks to me as if you two need something around that looks like a man, a heap more than Jim does. I know Peter Howling Dog to a fare-you-well; he's a bad actor, and you'll be all to the good if he forgets to come back. So if you'll stake me to a meal now and then, and a place to sleep, I'll be glad to see you through the winter—or until you get some white man to take my place." He took up the two water pails and waited, glancing from one to the other with that repressed smile which Billy Louise was beginning to look for in his face.

Now that matters had approached the point of decision, her mother stood looking at her helplessly, waiting for her to speak. Billy Louise drew herself up primly, and ended by contradicting the action. She gave him a sidelong

glance which he was least prepared to withstand—though in justice to Billy Louise, she was absolutely unconscious of its general effectiveness—and twisted her lips whimsically.

"We'll stake you to a book, a ban-nock, and a bed if you want to stay, Mr. Warren," she said quite soberly. "Also to a pitchfork and an ax, if you like, and regular wages."

His eyes went to her and steadied there with the intent expression in them. "Thanks. Cut out the wages, and I'll take the offer just as it stands," he told her, and pulled his hat farther down on his head. "She's going to be one stormy night, lay-dees," he added in quite another tone, on his way to the door. "Five o'clock by the town clock, and al-l's well!" This last in still another tone, as he pushed out against the swooping wind and pulled the door shut with a slam. They heard him whistling a shrill, rollicking air on his way to the creek; at least, it sounded rollicking, the way he whistled it.

"That's 'The Old Chisholm Trail' he's whistling," Billy Louise observed under her breath.

The whistling broke and he began to sing at the top of a clear, strong-lunged voice, that old, old trail song beloved of punchers the West over:

"Oh, it's cloudy in the West and a-lookin' like  
rain,  
And my damned old slicker's in the wagon  
again,  
Coma ti yi youpy, youpy-a, youpy-a,  
Coma ti yi youpy, youpy-a!"

"What did you say, Billy Louise? I'm sure it's a comfort to have him here, and you see he was glad and willing to——"

But Billy Louise was holding the door open half an inch, listening and slipping back into the child world wherein Ward Warren came singing down the cañon to rescue her. The words came gustily from the creek down the slope:

"No chaps, no slicker, and a-pourin' down  
rain,  
And I swear by the Lord I'll never night  
herd again,  
Coma ti yi youpy, youpy-a, youpy-a,  
Coma ti yi youpy, youpy-a!"

Feet in the stirrups and seat in the saddle,  
I hung and rattled with them longhorn cat-  
tle,  
Coma ti yi——"

"Do shut the door, Billy Louise. What you want to stand there like that for? And the wind freezing everything inside! I can feel a terrible draft on my feet and ankles, and you know what that leads to."

So Billy Louise closed the door and laid another alder root on the coals in the fireplace, the while her mind was given over to 'dreamy speculations and the words of that old trail song ran on in her memory, though she could no longer hear him singing.

## CHAPTER V.

"OLD DAME FORTUNE'S USED ME FOR A  
FOOTBALL."

Ward Warren sat before the fireplace with a cigarette long gone cold in his fingers, and stared into the blaze until the blaze died to bright-glowing coals and the coals filmed and shrank into the bed of ashes. Billy Louise had spoken to him twice and he had not answered. She had swept all around him, and he had shifted his feet out of her way, without any real consciousness of what he was doing.

Billy Louise put away the broom and hung the dustpan on its nail behind the door, and stood looking at Ward curiously and with some resentment; this was not the first time he had gone into fits of abstraction as deep as his absorption in the books he read so hungrily. He had been at the Wolverine a month, and they were pretty well acquainted by now, and inclined to friendliness when Ward threw off his moodi-



ness and his air of holding himself ready for some affront which he seemed to expect; but for all that the distrust never quite left his eyes, and there were times like this when he was absolutely oblivious to her presence.

Billy Louise suddenly lost patience. She stood and picked up a bit of bark the size of her thumb and threw it at him, with a little, vexed twist of her lips. She had a fine accuracy of aim—she hit him on the nape of the neck, just where his hair came down in a queer little curly "cowlick" in the middle.

Ward jumped up and whirled—and when he faced Billy Louise he had a gun gripped in the fingers that had held the cigarette so loosely. In his eyes was the glare which a man turns upon his deadliest enemy, perhaps, but seldom indeed upon a girl. So they faced each other while Billy Louise backed against the wall and took two sharp breaths.

Ward relaxed; a shamed flush reddened his whole face. He shoved the gun back inside the belt of his trousers—Billy Louise had never dreamed that he carried any weapon save his haughty aloofness of manner—and with a little snort of self-disgust dropped back into the chair. He did not stare again into the fire, however. He folded his arms upon the high chairback and laid his face down upon them, like a woman who is hurt to the point of tears, and yet will not weep. His booted feet were thrust toward the dying coals, his whole attitude spoke of utter desolation—of a loneliness beyond words.

Billy Louise set her teeth hard together to keep back the tears. Suffering of any sort always wrung the tender heart of her. She went to him and laid her two hands on his shoulders without even thinking that this was the first time she had ever touched him.

"Don't!" she said, half whispering so that she would not waken her mother, in bed with an attack of lumbago. "I

—I didn't know. Ward, listen to me! Whatever it is, can't you tell me? You—I'm your friend. Don't look as if you—you hadn't a friend on earth!"

Still he did not move, or give any sign that he heard. Billy Louise had no thought of coquetry. Her heart ached with pity and a longing to help him. She slid one hand up and pinched his ear, just as she would playfully tweak the ear of a child.

"Ward, you mustn't. I've seen you think and think, and look as if you hadn't a friend on earth. You mustn't. I suppose you've got lots of friends, who'd stand by you through anything. Anyway, you've got me, and—I understand all about it." She whispered those last words, and her heart thumped heavily with trepidation after she had spoken.

Ward raised his head, caught one of her hands, and held it fast while he looked deep into her eyes. He was searching, questioning, measuring, and he was doing it without uttering a word. The plummet dropped straight into the clear, sweet depths of her soul. If it did not reach the bottom, he was satisfied with the soundings he took. He drew a deep breath and gave her hand a little squeeze and let it go.

"Did I scare you? I'm sorry," he said, speaking in a hushed tone because of the woman in the next room. "I was thinking about a man I may meet some day; and, if I do meet him, the chances are I'll kill him. I—didn't—I forgot where I was——" He threw out a hand in a gesture that amply completed explanation and apology, and fumbled in his pocket for tobacco and papers. Abstractedly he began the making of a cigarette.

Billy Louise put wood on the fire, pulled up a square, calico-padded stool, and sat down. She waited, and she had the wisdom to wait in complete silence.

Ward leaned forward with a twig in his hand, got it ablaze, and lighted his

cigarette. He did not look at Billy Louise until he had taken a whiff or two. Then he stared at her for a full minute, and ended by flipping the charred twig playfully into her lap, and laughing a little because she jumped.

"What made you catch your breath when I told my name that night I came?" he asked quizzically—but with a tensivity behind the lightness of his tone and behind the little smile in his eyes as well. "Where had you ever heard of me before?"

Billy Louise gasped again, sent a lightning thought into the future, and answered more casually than she had hoped she could.

"When I was a kid I ran across the name—somewhere in a paper—and I used it to play with. I—I made you play the hero. I used," said Billy Louise, forcing a laugh, "to have some wild old times with you, believe me! So when you told your name, why, it was just like—you know. It was exactly like having a doll come to life!"

He eyed her fixedly until she tingled with nervousness.

"Yes—and what about—understanding all about it? *Do* you?" He drew his under lip, let it go, and drew it again between his teeth while he frowned at her thoughtfully. "*Do* you understand all about it?" he insisted, leaning toward her, and never once taking that boring gaze from her face.

"I—well, I—do—some of it, anyway." Billy Louise lifted a hand spasmodically to her throat. This was digging deeper into the agonies of life than she had ever gone before. "What was in the paper," she whispered later, as if his eyes were drawing it from her by force.

"What was that? What did it say?"

"I—I—what difference does it make what it said?" Billy Louise turned imploring eyes upon him. Her breath was coming fast and uneven. "It doesn't matter—to me—in the least. It—didn't

say much. I—can't tell exactly——" She was growing white around the mouth. The horror of being compelled to say, out loud—and to him!

"I didn't know there was a woman in the world like you," Ward said irrelevantly, and looked into the fire. "I thought women were just soft things a man had to take care of and carry along through life, a dead weight when they weren't worse. I never knew a woman could be a friend—the kind of friend a man can be." He threw his cigarette into the fire and watched the paper shrivel swiftly, and the tobacco turn into a thin, blue smoke spiral.

"Life's a queer thing," he said, taking a different angle. "I started out with big notions about the things I'd do. Maybe I started wrong, but for a kid with nobody to point the trail for him, I don't think I did so worse—till old Dame Fortune spotted me in the crowd and proceeded to use me for a football. What was it you read?" he asked abruptly.

"I—don't like to—say it," she whispered unsteadily.

"Well, you needn't. I'll say it for you—when I come to it. There's a lot before that."

Ward Warren had never before opened his soul to any human; not completely. Perhaps, sitting that evening in the deepening dusk, with the firelight lighting swiftly the brooding face of the girl and afterward veiling it softly with shadows—perhaps even then there were desolate places in his life which his words did not touch. But so much as a man may put into words, Ward told her; more—a great deal more—than he would ever tell to any other woman as long as he lived. More, perhaps, than he would ever tell to any man. And in it all there was no word of love. It was of what lay behind him that he talked. Sometimes the eyes of Billy Louise were soft with sympathy. Sometimes they were wide, and held the light



of horror. Once, with a small sob that had no tears, she reached out and clutched his arm. "Oh, don't!" she gasped. "Don't go on telling—I—I can't bear to listen to that!"

"It isn't nice for a woman to listen to, I guess," Ward gritted. "I know it was hell to stand, but——" He was silent so long after that, and his eyes grew so intent and so somber while he stared, that Billy Louise pulled at his sleeve to recall him.

"Skip that part, and tell me——"

Ward took up the story and told her much; more than she had ever dreamed could be. I can't repeat any of it; what he said was for Billy Louise to know, and none other.

After that, though there was never any word of love between them, Billy Louise, with the sure instinct of a woman innately pure, watched unobtrusively for signs of those fits of bitter brooding; watched and drove them off with various weapons of her own. Sometimes she cheerfully declared that she was bored to death, and wasn't Ward just dying for a game of "rob cassino"? Sometimes she simply teased him into retaliation. Frequently she insisted that he repeat the things he had learned by heart, of poetry or humorous prose, for his memory was almost uncanny in its tenacity.

Billy Louise meant only to wean him from his bitterness against life, and to convince him—by a somewhat roundabout method, since at heart she was scared to death by his aloofness—that he was not "Old Lady Fortune's football" as he sometimes pessimistically declared. If she did more than that she did not know it then; for Ward Warren had learned, along with other hard lessons, the art of keeping his thoughts locked safely away, and of using his face for a mask to hide even the doorway to his real self.

She took him up the cañon, and had the doubtful satisfaction of seeing him

doubled over the saddle horn in a paroxysm of laughter when she led him to the historical washout and recounted the feat of the dead Indians with which he had made a safe passing for her.

"Well, they did it in history," she defended at last, her cheeks redder than was perfectly normal. "I read about it—at Waterloo when the Duke of Wellington—wasn't it? You needn't laugh as if it *couldn't* be done. It was that sunken-road business put it into my head in the first place; and I think you ought to feel flattered."

"I do," gasped Ward, wiping his eyes. "Say, I was some bandit, wasn't I, William Louisa?"

Billy Louise looked at him sidewise. "No, you weren't any bandit at all—then. You were a kind scout, that time. I was here, all surrounded by Indians, and saying the Lord's Prayer with my hair all down my back like mommie's Rock of Ages picture—*will* you shut up laughing?—and you came riding up that draw over there on a big, black horse named Sultan. You needn't snort—I still think Sultan's a dandy name for a horse! And you hollered to me to get behind that rock, over there. And I quit at 'Forgive us our debts'—*dad* always had so many!—and hiked for the rock. And you commenced shooting—— Oh, I'm not going to tell you a single other pretend!" She sulked then, which was quite as diverting as the most hair-raising "pretend" she had ever told him, and held Ward's attention unflaggingly until they were half-way home.

"Sing 'The Chisholm Trail,'" she commanded, when her temper was sunshiny again. This had been a particularly moody day for Ward, and Billy Louise felt that extra effort was required to rout the memory devils. "Daddy knew a little of it, and old Jake Summers used to sing more—but I never did hear it all."

"Ladies don't, as a general thing," Ward replied, biting his lips.

"Why? I know there's about forty verses—and some of them are kind of sweary ones; but go ahead and sing it. I don't mind 'damn' now and then."

This sublime innocence was also diverting, even to a man haunted by the devils of memory.

He did not sing the whole forty verses, for good and sufficient reasons best known to punchers themselves. But, with swift, shamed skipping of certain lines and some hasty revisions, he did actually sing thirty, and Billy Louise was so engrossed that she forgot to count them, and so never suspected the omissions; for some of the verses were quite "sweary" enough to account for his hesitation.

The singing of those thirty verses brought a reminiscent mood upon the singer. For the rest of the way, which they rode at a walk, Ward sat very much upon one side of the saddle with his body facing Billy Louise, and his foot dangling free of the stirrup, and told her tales of trail herds and the cow camps, and of funny things that had happened on the range. His "I remember one time——" opened the door to a more fascinating world than Billy Louise's dream world, because this other world was real.

So, from pure accident, she hit upon the most effective of all weapons with which to fight the memory devils. She led Ward to remembering the pleasanter parts of his past life, and to telling her of them.

When spring came at last and he rode regretfully back to his claim on Mill Creek, he was not at all the morose Ward Warren who had ridden down to the Wolverine that stormy night in January. The distrust had left his eyes, and that guarded remoteness was gone from his manner. He thought and he planned as other men thought and planned, and looked into the future ea-

gerly, and dreamed dreams of his own; dreams that brought the hidden smile often to his lips and his eyes.

Still, the thing those dreams were built upon was yet locked tight in his heart, and not even Billy Louise, whose instinct was so keen and so sure in all things else, knew anything of them or of the bright-hued hope they were built upon. Fortune's football was making ready to fight desperately to become captain of the game, that he might be something more to Billy Louise.

## CHAPTER VI.

### MARTHY BURIES HER DEAD.

Jase did not move or give his customary, querulous grunt when Marthy nudged him at daylight, one morning in mid-April. Marthy gave another poke with her elbow and lay still, numbed by a sudden dread. She moved cautiously out of the bed and half across the cramped room before she turned her head toward him. Then she stood still and looked and looked, her hard face growing each moment more pinched and stony and gray.

Jase lay rigid under the coarse, gray blanket, the flesh of his face drawn close to the bones, his skimpy, gray beard tilted upward; he had died while the coyotes were yapping their dawn song up on the rim of the Cove.

Marthy's jaw set into a harsher outline than ever. She dressed with slow, heavy movements, and went out and fed the stock. In stolid calm she did the milking, and turned out the cows into the pasture. She gathered an apronful of chips and started a fire, just as she had done every morning for twenty-nine years, and she put the coffee-pot on the greasy stove and boiled the brew of yesterday—which was also her habit.

She sat for some time with her head leaning upon her grimy hand, and stared



unseeingly out upon a peach tree in full bloom, and at a pair of busy robins who had chosen a convenient crotch for their nest. Finally she rose stiffly, as if she had grown older within the last hour, and went outside to the place where she had been mending the irrigating ditch the day before; knocked the wet sand off the shovel she had left sticking in the soft bank, and went out of the yard and up the slope toward the rock wall.

On a tiny, level place above the main ditch and just under the wall, Marthy began to dig, setting her broad flat foot uncompromisingly upon the shoulder of the shovel and sending it deep into the yellow soil. She worked slowly and methodically and steadily, just as she did everything else. When she had dug down as deep as she could and still manage to climb out, and had the hole wide enough and long enough, she got awkwardly to the grassy surface and sat for a long while upon a rock, and stared dumbly at the gaunt, brown hills across the river.

She returned to the cabin at last, and, with the manner of one who dreads doing what must be done, she went in where Jase lay stiff under the blankets.

Early that afternoon, Marthy went staggering up the slope, wheeling Jase's body before her on the creaky, home-made wheelbarrow. In the same harsh, primitive manner in which they both had lived, Marthy buried her dead. And though in life she had given him few words save in command or upbraiding, with never a hint of love to sweeten the days for either, yet she went whimpering away from that grave. She broke off three branches of precious peach blossoms and carried them up the slope, and stuck them upright in the lumpy soil over Jase's head, and stood there a long while with tear-streaked face, staring down at the grave, and at the nodding pink blossoms.

Billy Louise rode singing down the rocky trail through the deep, narrow gorge, to where the hawthorn and chokecherries hid the opening to the Cove. It was long since Billy Louise had turned his head down the rocky trail, and Blue liked little the gloom of the gorge and the sudden change to soft, black soil that stopped just short of being boggy in the wet places. Where the trail led into a marshy crossing of the big irrigating ditch that brought the stream from far up the gorge to water meadow and orchard, Blue halted and cast a look of disapproval back at his rider. Billy Louise stopped singing, and laughed at him.

"I guess you can go where a cow can go, you silly thing. Mud's a heap easier than lava rock, if you only knew it, Blue. Get along with you."

Blue lowered his head and snuffed suspiciously at the water-filled tracks. Mud he despised instinctively since he had nearly mired on the creek bank when he was a sucking colt. But obediently he lifted himself, leaped the ditch in one clean jump, and snorted when he sank nearly to his knees in the soft, black soil beyond.

From there to the pink drift of peach blossom against the dull brown of the bluff, Blue galloped angrily, leaving deep, black prints in the soft green of the meadow. So they came headlong upon Marthy, just as she was knocking the yellow clay of the grave from her irrigating shovel against the pole fence of her pigpen.

"Why, Marthy!" Once before in her life Billy Louise had seen Marthy's chin quivering like that, and big, slow tears sliding down the network of lines on Marthy's leathery cheeks. With a painful slump her spirits went heavy with her sympathy. "Marthy!"

She knew without a word of explanation just what had happened. From Marthy's bent shoulders she knew, and from her tear-stained face—and from

the yellow soil clinging still to the shovel in her hand. The wide eyes of Billy Louise went seeking glances up the slope where the soil was yellow; went to the long, raw ridge under the wall, with the peach blossoms standing pitifully awry upon the western end. Her eyes filled with tears. "Oh, Marthy! When was it?"

"In the night some time, I guess." Marthy's voice had a harsh huskiness. "He was—gone—when I woke up. Well—he's better off than I be. I dunno what woulda become of him if I'd went first." There, at last, was a note of tenderness, stifled though it was, and fleeting. "Git down, Billy Louise, and come in. I been kinda lookin' for yuh to come, ever sence the weather opened up. How's your maw?"

Spoken sympathy was absolutely impossible in the face of that stoical acceptance of life's harsh law. Marthy turned toward the gate, taking the shovel and the wheelbarrow in with her. Billy Louise glanced furtively at the raw, yellow ridge under the rock wall, and rode on to the stable. She pulled off the saddle and bridle, and turned Blue into the corral before she went slowly—and somewhat reluctantly—to the cabin, squat, old, and unkempt like its mistress, but buried deep in the renewed sweetness of bloom-time.

"The fruit's comin' on early this year," said Marthy from the doorway, her hands on her hips. "They's goin' to be lots of it, too—if we don't git a killin' frost." So she closed the conversational door upon her sorrow, and pointed the way to trivial, everyday things.

"What are you going to do now, Marthy?" Billy Louise was perfectly capable of opening a conversational door even when it had been closed decisively in her face. "You can't go on here alone, you know. Did you send

for that nephew? If you haven't, you must hire somebody till——"

"He's comin'. That letter you sent over last month was from him. I dunno when he'll git here—he's liable to come most any time. I ain't going to hire nobody. I kin git along alone. I might as well of been alone——" Even harsh Marthy hesitated, and did not finish the sentence that would have put a slight upon her dead.

"I'll stay to-night, anyway," said Billy Louise. "Just a week ago I hired John Pringle, and that little breed wife of his, for the summer. I couldn't afford it," she added, with a small sigh, "but Ward had to go back to his claim, and mommie needs some one in the house. She hasn't been a bit well, all winter. And I've turned all the stock out for the summer and have to do a lot of riding on them. Are you going to turn your cattle out, Marthy? I see you haven't yet."

"No, I ain't yit. I dunno—I was going to sell 'em down to jest what the pasture'll keep. I'm gittin' too old to look after 'em. But I dunno—— When Charlie gits here, mebby——"

"Oh, is that the nephew? I didn't know his name."

"Charlie Fox, his name is. I hope he turns out a good worker. I've never had a chance to git ahead any; but if Charlie'll jest take holt I'll mebby git some comfort outa life yit."

"He ought to, I'm sure. And every one thinks you've done awfully well, Marthy. What can I do now? Wash the dishes and straighten things up, I guess."

"You needn't do nothin' you ain't a mind to do, Billy Louise. I don't want you to think you got to slop around washin' my dirty dishes. I'm goin' on down into the medder and work on a ditch I'm puttin' in. You jest do what you're a mind to." She picked up the shovel and went off down the jungly path, herself the ugliest object in the



Cove, where she had created so much beauty.

Shudderingly, Billy Louise looked into the unpleasant bedroom, and, comprehending all of the sordidness of the tragedy, spent half an hour with her teeth set hard together while she dragged out dingy blankets and hung them over the fence under a voluptuous plum tree. The next hour was so disagreeably employed that she wondered afterward how even her sympathy could have driven her to the things she did. She carried more water, after she had scrubbed that bedroom and opened the window with the aid of the hammer, and set the teakettle on to heat the dishwater. Then, because her mind was full of poor, dead Jase, she took the branches of wild cherry and hawthorn blossoms she had gathered coming down the gorge, and went up the slope to lay them on his grave.

## CHAPTER VII.

### AND GREET'S HER NEPHEW.

Billy Louise sat down on the rock where Marthy had rested after digging the grave, and, with her chin in her two cupped palms, stared out across the river at the heaped bluffs, and down at the pink-and-white patch of fruit trees. She was trying, as the young will always try, to solve the riddle of life; and she was baffled and unhappy because she could not find any answer at all that pleased both her ideals and her reason. And then she heard a man's voice lifted up in riotous song, and she turned her head toward the opening of the gorge and listened, her eyes brightening while she waited.

"Foot in the stirrup and hand on the horn,  
Best blamed cowboy ever was born,  
Coma ti yi youpy, youpy-a, youpy-a,  
Coma ti yi youpy, youpy-a!"

Billy Louise, with her chin still in her palms, smiled and hummed the tune

under her breath; that is how quickly we throw off the burdens of our neighbors. "Wonder what he's doing down here?" she asked, and smiled again.

"I'm going back to town to draw my money, I'm going back to town to see my honey, Coma ti yi——"

Ward came into sight through the little meadow, riding slowly, with both hands clasped over the horn of the saddle, his hat tilted back on his head, and his whole attitude one of absolute content with life. He saw Billy Louise almost as soon as she glimpsed him—and she had been watching that bit of road quite closely. He flipped the reins to one side, and turned from the trail to ride straight up the slope to where she was.

Billy Louise, with a self-reproachful glance at the grave, ran down the slope to meet him—an unexpected welcome which made Ward's heart leap.

"Oh, Ward—for Heaven's sake don't be singing that come-all-ye at the top of your voice, like that. Don't you——"

"Now I was given to understand that you liked that same come-all-ye. Have you been educating your musical taste in the last week, Miss William Louisa?" Ward stopped his horse before her, and with his hands still clasped over the saddle horn, looked down at her with that hidden smile—and something else.

"No, I haven't. I don't have to educate myself to the point where I know 'The Chisholm Trail' isn't a proper kind of funeral hymn, Ward Warren." Billy Louise glanced over her shoulder and lowered her voice instinctively as we all do when death has come close and stopped. "Jase died last night; that's his grave up there. Isn't it perfectly pitiful? Poor old Marthy was here all solitary alone with him. And—Ward!—she dug that grave her own self, and took him up and buried him—and Ward! She—she wheeled him up in the—wheelbarrow! She had to, of course. She couldn't carry him. But

isn't it awful?" Her hands were up, patting and smoothing the neck of his horse, and her face was bent to hide the tears that stood in her eyes, and the quiver of her mouth.

Ward drew in his lip, bit it, and let it go. He was a man and he had seen much of tragedy and trouble; also, he did not know Marthy or Jase. His chief emotion was one of resentment against anything that brought tears to Billy Louise. He leaned and flipped the end of his reins lightly down on her bare head.

"William Louisa, if you cry about it I'll—do something shocking, most likely. Yes, it's awful; a whole lot of life is awful. But it's done, and Mrs. Martha appears to be a woman with a whole lot of grit, so the chances are she'll carry her load like a man. She'll be horribly lonesome, down here—they lived alone, didn't they?"

Several minutes they stood there, talking, while Billy Louise patted the horse absently, and Ward looked down at her, and did not miss one little light or shadow in her face.

"You saw mommie, of course—you came from home?"

"No, I did not. I got as far as the creek and saw Blue's tracks coming down; so I just sort of trailed along—seeing it was mommie's daughter I felt most like talking to."

"Mommie's daughter" laughed a little, and instinctively made a change in the subject. She did not see anything strange in the fact that Ward had observed and recognized Blue's tracks coming into the gorge.

"I've got to go in and wash the dishes," she said, stepping back from him. "Of course, nothing was done in the cabin, and I've been doing a little housecleaning. I guess the dishwater is hot by this time—if it hasn't all boiled away."

Ward, as a matter of course, tied his horse to the fence, and went into the

cabin with her. He also asked her to stake him to a dishtowel, which she did after a good deal of rummaging to find one. He stood with his hat on the back of his head, a cigarette between his lips, and wiped the dishes with much apparent enjoyment. He objected strongly to Billy Louise's assertion that she meant to scrub the floor, but when he found her quite obdurate he changed his method without in the least degree yielding his point, though for diplomatic reasons he appeared to yield.

He carried water from the creek and filled the teakettle, the big iron pot, and both pails. Then, when Billy Louise had turned her back upon him while she looked in a dark corner for the mop, he suddenly seized her under the arms and lifted her upon the table; and before she had finished her astonished gaspings he caught up a pail of water and sloshed it upon the floor under her. Then he grinned in his triumph.

"William Louisa, if you get your feet wet your mommie will take a club to you," he reminded her sternly. Whereupon, he took the broom and proceeded to give that floor a real man's scrubbing, and refused to quarrel with Billy Louise, who scolded like a cross old woman from the table—except when she simply had to stop and laugh at his violent method of cleaning.

Ward sloshed and swept and scrubbed. He dug into the corners with a grim thoroughness that won reluctant approbation from the young woman on the table with her feet tucked under her, and he made her forget poor old Jase up on the hillside. He scrubbed viciously behind the door until the water was little better than a thin, black mud.

"You want to come up to my claim some time," he said, looking over his shoulder while he rested a minute. "I'll show you how a man keeps house, William Jane." Then, damming up a muddy pool with the broom, he yanked open the door and swept out the water



with a perfectly unnecessary flourish just because he happened to be in an exuberant mood.

Billy Louise gave a squeal of consternation, and then sat absolutely still, staring, round-eyed, through the doorway. Ward stepped back—even his composure was slightly jarred—and twisted his lips amusedly.

"Hello," he said, after a few blank seconds. "You missed some of it, didn't you?" His tone was mildly commiserating. "Will you come in?"

"N-o-o, thank you, I don't believe I will." The speaker looked in, however, saw Billy Louise perched upon the table, and took off his hat. He was well plastered with dirty water that ran down and left streaks of mud behind. "I must have gotten off the road," he said. "I'm looking for Mr. Jason Meilke's ranch."

Billy Louise tucked her feet farther under her skirts and continued to stare dumbly. Ward, glancing at her from the corner of his eyes, stepped considerably between her and the stranger so that his broad shoulders quite hid her from the man's curious stare.

"You've struck the right place," he said calmly. "This is it." He picked up another pail of water and sloshed it upon the wet floor to rinse off the mud.

"Is—ah—Mrs. Meilke in?" One could not accuse the young man of craning, but he certainly did try to get another glimpse of the person on the table, and failed because of Ward.

"She's down in the meadow," Billy Louise murmured.

"She's down in the meadow," Ward repeated to the bespattered young man. "You just go down past the stable and follow on down——" He waved a hand vaguely before he took up the broom again. "You'll find her, all right," he added encouragingly.

"Oh, Ward! That must be Marthy's nephew. What will he think?"

"Does it matter such a h—a deuce

of a lot what he thinks?" Ward went on with his interrupted scrubbing.

"His name is Charlie Fox, and he's been to college, and he worked in a bank," Billy Louise went on nervously. "He's going to live here with Marthy and run the ranch. What must he have thought! To have you sweep all that dirty water on him——"

"Oh, not *all*," Ward corrected cheerfully. "Quite a lot missed him."

Billy Louise giggled. "What does he look like, Ward? You stood squarely in the way, so I——"

"He looked," said Ward dispassionately, "like a pretty mad young man with nose, eyes, and a mouth and a mole in front of his left ear."

"He was real polite," said Billy Louise reprovingly, "and his voice is nice."

"Yes. I mind-read a heap of cussing. The politeness was all on top." Ward chuckled and swept more water outside. "I expect you saved me a licking that time, Miss William the Conqueror."

"Can you think of any more names to call me besides my own, I wonder?" Billy Louise leaned and inspected the floor like a chicken preparing to hop off its roost.

"Heaps more." The glow in Ward's eyes was dangerous to their calm friendship. "Want to hear them?"

"No, I don't. I want to get off this table before that college-bank youth comes back to be shocked silly again. I want to see if he's really—got a mole in front of his ear!"

"You know what inquisitiveness did to old lady Lot, don't you? However——" He went and lifted her in his arms and set her down outside the door. "There, Wilhelmina; trot along, and see the nice young man."

Billy Louise sat down on the wheelbarrow, remembered its latest service, and got up hastily. "I won't go a step," she asserted positively.

Ward had not wanted her to go. He gave her a smile, and finished off his scrubbing with the mop, which he handled with surprising skill for a young man who seemed more at home in the saddle than anywhere else.

"I'm awfully glad he came, anyway." Billy Louise pulled down a budded lilac branch and sniffed at it. "I won't have to stay all night now. I was going to."

"In that case, the young man is welcome as a gold mine. Here they come—he and Mrs. Martha. You'll have to introduce me; I have never met the lady." Ward hastily returned the mop to its corner, rolled down his sleeves, and picked up his gloves. Then he stepped outside and waited beside Billy Louise, looking not in the least like a man who has just wiped a lot of dishes and scrubbed a floor.

The nephew, striding along behind Marthy and showing head and shoulders above her, seemed not to resent any little mischance such as muddy water flirted upon him from a broom. He grinned reminiscently as he came up, shook hands with the two of them, and did not let his glance dwell too long or too often upon Billy Louise, nor too briefly upon Ward.

"You've got a splendid place here, Aunt Martha," he told the old woman appreciatively. "I'd no idea there was such a little beauty spot down here. This is even more picturesque than that homy-looking ranch we passed a few miles back, down in that little valley. I was hoping that was your ranch when I first saw it; and when I found it wasn't, I came near stopping anyway. I'm glad I resisted the temptation now. This is worth coming a long way to see."

"I ain't never had a chance to do all I wanted to with it," said Marthy, with the first hint of apology Billy Louise had ever heard from her. "I only had one pair of hands to work with——"

"We'll fix that part. Don't you

worry a minute. You're going to sit in a rocking-chair and give orders from now on. And if I can't make good here, I ought to be booted all the way up that spooky gorge. Isn't that right?" He turned to Warren with a certain air of appraisement behind the unmistakable cordiality of his voice.

"A man ought to make good here, all right," Ward agreed neutrally. "It's a fine place."

When Ward went to the stable after Blue, half an hour later, Charlie Fox went with him. His manner when they were alone was different; not so exuberantly cheerful—more frank and practical.

"Honest, it floored me completely to see what that poor old woman has been up against down here," he told Warren, stuffing tobacco into a silver-rimmed brier pipe while Ward saddled Blue. "I don't know a lot about this ranch game—but if that old lady can put it across, I guess I can wobble along somehow. Too bad the old man cashed in just now—but Aunt Martha as good as told me he wasn't much force, so maybe I can play a lone hand here as easy as I could have done with him. Live near here?"

"Fifteen miles or so." Ward was not in his most expansive mood, chiefly for the reason that this man was a stranger, and of strangers he was inclined to fight shy.

"Oh, well—it might have been fifty. I know how you fellows measure distances out here. I'm likely to need a little coaching, now and then, if I live up to what I just now told the old lady."

"From all I know of her, you won't need to go out of the Cove for advice."

"Well, that's right, judging from the looks of things. A woman that can go up against a proposition like she did to-day, and handle it alone, is no mental weakling; to say nothing of the



way this ranch looks. All right, Warren—I'll make out alone, I reckon."

## CHAPTER VIII.

A MATTER OF TWELVE MONTHS OR SO.

Billy Louise did not in the least realize that she was attempting anything out of the ordinary when she took a half-developed ranch in the middle of a land almost as wild as it had been when the Indians wandered over it unmolested, a few cattle and horses, and a bundle of debts to make her head swim, and set herself the problem of increasing the number of cattle and eliminating the debts, and of wresting prosperity out of a condition of picturesquely haphazard poverty.

She went about it with the pathetic confidence of youth and ignorance. She rode up and down the cañons and over the higher, grassier ridges, and watched the cattle on their summer range and kept them from straying. She went with John Pringle after posts, and helped him fence certain fertile slopes and hollows for winter grazing, and she drove the rickety old mower through the waving grass along the creek bottoms, and hummed little, contented tunes while she watched the grass sway and fall evenly when the sickle shuttled through.

When she sold seven fat, three-year-old steers that fall, and paid a note twice renewed, and managed besides to buy the winter supply of "grub" and a sewing machine and a set of silver teaspoons for her mother, oh, but she was proud!

Ward rode down to the ranch that night, and Billy Louise showed him the note with its red stamp, oblong and imposing and slightly blurred on the "paid" side. Ward was almost as proud as she, if looks and tones went for anything, and he helped Billy Louise a good deal by telling her just how much she ought to pay for the year-

lings old Johnson, over on Snake River, had for sale; and how much hay it would take to winter them, though she knew that already—and just what percentage of profit she might expect from a given number in a given period of time.

He told her of his own work and plans as well. He was going into cattle also, as fast as possible, he said. In a few years the sheep would probably come in and crowd them out, but in the meantime there was money in cattle—and the more cattle, the more money. He was going to work for wages till the winter set in. He didn't know when he would see Billy Louise, he said, but he would stop on his way back.

Meanwhile, Charlie Fox had been giving himself to his new job with commendable enthusiasm. Billy Louise did not see him very often, but when she did it was with a deepening impression of his unflagging tenderness to Marthy—a tenderness that manifested itself in many little, unassuming thoughtfulnesses—and of his good humor and his energy, and several other qualities which one must admire.

"Mommie, that nephew goes at everything just as if it were a game," she said after one visit. "You know what that cabin has always been—dark and dirty and not a comfortable chair to sit down in, or a book or magazine or anything? Well, I'm just going to take you over there some day, and let you see the difference. He's cut two more windows and built on an addition with a porch, if you please. And he has a bookcase he made himself, just *stuffed* with books and magazines. And he made Marthy a rocking-chair, mommie, and—she wears a white apron and has her hair combed, and sits and rocks! Honest to goodness, you wouldn't think she was the same woman."

"Marthy always seemed to me more like a man than a woman," said her

mother. "She didn't have nothing domestic in her whole make-up, far as I could see. Her cooking——"

"Well, mommie, Marthy cooks real well now. Charlie praises up her bread, and she takes lots of pains with it. And she just fusses with her flowers and lets him run the ranch—and, mommie, she just worships Charlie! He's going to buy more cattle, too, he says. Young stock mostly. He says there's no sense in anybody being poor in such a country as this. He's just managing right, and making every dollar count. He got calves from Seaback, up the river, cheaper than I did from Johnson, mommie. He rode all over the country, and looked up range conditions and prices. He didn't say so, but he made me feel foolish because I just bought the first ones I saw, without waiting to look around first. But—Ward said it was a good buy, and he ought to know; only, the fact remains that Charlie has done better. I guess it isn't experience that counts, altogether. Charlie Fox has got brains."

"Land alive! I guess he ain't the only one, Billy Louise. You're doing better than your father done, and he wasn't any Jase Meilke kind of a man, but a good, hard worker always. You don't want to get all outa conceit with yourself just because Charlie Fox is gitting along all right."

But Billy Louise wasn't listening. She was comparing two young men and measuring them with certain standards of her own, and she was not quite satisfied with the result. She had seen Charlie Fox spring up with a perfectly natural courtesy and hand Marthy a chair when she entered the room where he had been discussing books with Billy Louise. She had seen him stand beside his own chair until Marthy was seated, and then had heard him deftly turn the conversation into a channel wherein Marthy had also an interest.

She had seen that and more. And she had a vivid picture of Ward, sitting absorbed in a book which he never afterward mentioned, and letting her or her mother lift heavy pieces of wood upon the fire within arm's reach of him; and for the life of her she could not help wishing that Ward was different.

"Ain't that Ward coming, Billy Louise? Seems to me it looks like him—the way he rides."

Billy Louise started guiltily, and looked up toward the trail, now piled deep with shadows. It was Ward, all right, and his voice, lifted in a good-humored shout, brought Billy Louise to her feet and sent her down the slope to the stable, where he had stopped as a matter of course.

When he turned and smiled at her through the dusk and said, "'Lo, Bill" in a voice that was like a spoken kiss, a certain young woman hated herself for a weak-souled traitor, and mentally called Charlie Fox a popinjay—which was merely shifting injustice to another resting place.

"Are you plumb tickled to death to see me, William?"

"Oh, no—but I guess I can stand it!"

And a smile to go with both sentences, and a strong undercurrent of something unnamed in their tones—who wanted the Pasteurized milk and distilled water of a perfectly polite form of greeting? Not Billy Louise—if one might judge from that young woman's face and voice and manner. Not Ward—though he was perfectly unconscious of having been weighed or measured or judged by any standard at all.

And yet, when Charlie Fox rode down to the Wolverine a week or so later, Billy Louise simply could not help admiring him and liking him for his frank good nature and his kindness.

It was not until Charlie was leaving that he gave Billy Louise a hint that



his errand was not yet accomplished. She walked down with him to where his horse was tied, and so gave him a chance to speak what was in his mind.

"You know, I hate to mention little worries before your mother," he said. "But I am worried, Miss Louise. I came over to ask you if you've seen anything of four calves of ours. I know you ride a good deal through the hills. They disappeared a week ago, and I can't find any trace of them. I've been looking all through the hills, but I can't locate them."

Billy Louise had not seen them either, and she begged for particulars. "I don't see how they could get away from your Cove," she said, "unless your bars were down."

"The bars were all right. It was last Friday, I think. I'm not sure. They were in the little meadow above the house, you see. I was away that night, and Aunt Martha is a little hard of hearing. She wouldn't hear anything unless there was considerable noise. I came home the next forenoon—I was over to Seaback's—and the bars were in place then. Aunt Martha had not been up the gorge, nor had any one come to the ranch while I was gone. So, you see, Miss Louise, here's a very pretty mystery!" He laughed, but Billy Louise saw by his eyes that he did not laugh very deeply, and that he was really worried.

"I must have made a mistake and bought mountain sheep instead of calves," he said, and laughed again. "They couldn't have gone through those bars or over them; and I did have a spark of intelligence and look along the river for tracks, you know. They had not been near the river, which has soft banks along there. They watered from the little creek that comes down the gorge. Miss Louise, do you have flying cattle in Idaho?"

"You think they were driven off, don't you?" Billy Louise asked a ques-

tion with the words, and made a statement of it with her tone, which was a trick of hers.

Charlie Fox shook his head, but his eyes did not complete the denial. "Miss Louise, I'd work every other theory to death before I'd admit that possibility! I don't know all of my neighbors so very well, but I should hesitate a long, long time——"

"It needn't have been a neighbor. There are lots of strange men passing through the country. Did you look for tracks?"

"I—did not. I didn't want to admit that possibility. I decline to admit it now. I'd have to know absolutely before I'd accuse any one of stealing those calves, Miss Louise. I'd have to see them in a man's corral, with his brand on them—I believe that's the way it's done out here—and even then——"

"Where have you looked?" There were reasons why this particular subject was painful to Billy Louise. "And are you sure they didn't get out of that pasture and wander on down the Cove, among all those willows? It's a perfect jungle, away down."

"I hunted through every inch of that willow jungle, and all along the bluff and the river—Miss Louise. I put in three days at it, from sunrise till it was too dark to see. Then I began riding outside. There isn't a trace of them anywhere. I had just bought them from Seaback, you know. I drove them home, and because they were tired and so was I, I just left them in that upper meadow as I came down the gorge. I hadn't branded them yet. I—I know I've made an awful botch of the thing, Miss Louise," he confessed, turned toward her with an honest distress and a self-flaying humility in his eyes that wiped from Billy Louise's mind any incipient tendency toward contempt. "But, you see, I'm green at this ranch game. And I never dreamed those calves weren't perfectly

safe in there. The fence was new and strong—I built it new this fall, you know. And the bars are absolutely *bars* to any stock larger than a rabbit. Of course," he added, with a deprecating note, "four calves are only four calves. But—it's the sense of failure that gets me hardest, Miss Louise."

"Were they vented?" she asked.

"I—yes, I think they were. That's what you call it when the former owner puts his brand in a different place to show that his ownership has ceased, isn't it? Seaback puts his brand upside down——"

"I know Seaback's vent," Billy Louise cut in. "And I should have noticed it if I had seen four calves vented fresh and not rebranded. Why in the world didn't you stick your brand on at the same time?" Billy Louise was losing patience with his greenness.

"I didn't have my branding iron with me," Charlie answered humbly. "I have done that before, when I bought those other cows and calves. I——"

"You'd better pack your iron next time," she retorted. "If you can't get a little bunch of calves ten miles without losing them——"

"But you must understand, I *did*! I took them home and turned them into the Cove."

"Well, I wouldn't worry," said Billy Louise. "The calves may not be absolutely lost, you know. Why, I lost a big steer last spring, and never found him till I was going to sell a few head. Then he turned up, the biggest and fattest one in the bunch. You can't tell; they get themselves in queer places sometimes. I'll come over to-morrow, if I can, and take a look at that pasture and all around. And I'll keep a look-out for the calves."

The next day Billy Louise rode early to the Cove, and learned some things from Marthy which she had not gleaned from Charlie. She learned that two of

the calves were a deep red except for a wide, white stripe on the nose of one and white hind feet on the other; that another was spotted on the hind quarters, and that the fourth was white with large red blotches. She had known cattle all her life. She would know these if she saw them anywhere.

She also discovered for herself that they could not have broken out of that pasture, and that the river bank was impassable, what with high, thick bushes and miry mud in the open spaces. The calves had not gone investigating the bank, for there was not a trace anywhere. And the bluff was absolutely unscalable. Billy Louise herself would have felt doubtful of climbing out that way. The gray rim rock stood straight and high at the top, with never a crevice, so far as she could see. And the gorge was barred so that it was impossible to go that way without lifting heavy poles out of deep sockets and sliding them to one side.

"I've got an idea about a gate here," Charlie confided suddenly. "There won't be any more mysteries like this. I'm going to fix a swinging gate in place of these bars, Miss Louise. I shall have it swing uphill, like this; and I'll have a weight arranged so that it will always close itself, if one is careless enough to ride on and leave it open. I have it all worked out in my alleged brain. I shall do it right away, too. Aunt Marthy is rather nervous about this gorge now. Every evening she walks up here herself to make sure the bars are closed."

"You may as well make up your mind to it," said Billy Louise irrelevantly, in a tone of absolute certainty. "Those calves were driven out of the gorge. That means stolen. You needn't accuse any one in particular—I don't suppose you could. But they were stolen."

Charlie's eyes had the troubled look. "I hate to think that. Aunt Martha in-



sists that is what we are up against, but——”

“Well, she knows more about it than you do, believe me. If you’ll let down the bars, Mr. Fox, I’ll hit the trail. And if I find out anything I’ll let you know at once.”

When she rode over the bleak upland she caught herself wishing that she might talk the thing over with Ward. He would know just what ought to be done. But winter was coming, and she would drive her stock down into the fields she had ready. They would be safe there, surely. Still, she wished Ward would come. She wanted to talk it over with a man who understood and who knew more about such things than she did.

## CHAPTER IX.

### WARD HUNTS WOLVES.

The fate of the four heifer calves became permanently wrapped in the blank fog of mystery. Billy Louise watched for them when she rode out in the hills, and spent a good deal of time heretofore given over to dreaming in trying to solve the riddle of their disappearance. Charlie Fox insisted upon keeping to the theory that they had merely strayed. Marthy grumbled sometimes over the loss, and Ward—well, Ward did not put in an appearance again that fall or winter, and so did not hear of the incident.

Ward, as a matter of fact, had a very good reason for his absence. He was working for a rancher over on the other side of the mountains, and when he got leave of absence it was merely that he might ride to his claim and sleep there a night in compliance with the law, and see that nothing was disturbed. He was earning forty dollars a month—which he could not afford to jeopardize by any prolonged absence; and he was to take part of his pay in

cows. Also, he had made arrangements to keep his few head of stock with the rancher’s for a nominal sum which barely saved Ward from the humiliation of feeling that the man was giving him something for nothing.

The rancher—his name was Junkins—was a good fellow, and he had a fair sense of values. He knew that he could pay Ward good wages and let him winter his stock there—Ward had seven or eight head at that time—and still make a fair profit on Ward’s labor. For Ward stuck to his work and he worked fast, with the drive of his nervous energy and the impatience he always felt toward any obstacle.

Junkins considered privately that Ward was giving him the work of two men, while he had the appetite of one. So that it was to his interest to induce Ward to stay until spring opened and give him plenty to do on his own claim; and such was Ward’s anxiety to acquire some property and a certain financial security, that he put behind him the temptation to ride down to the Wolverine until he was once more his own master. He had sold his time to Junkins. He would not pilfer the hours it would take to ride twenty miles and back again, even to see Billy Louise; which proves that he was no moral weakling, whatever else he might be.

Then in April he left Junkins and drove home a nice little bunch of ten cows and a two-year-old and two yearlings. One of the cows had a week-old calf, and there would be more before long. Ward sang the whole of “The Chisholm Trail” at the top of his voice as he drifted the cattle slowly up the long hill to the top of the divide, from where he could look down over lower hills into his own little creek bottom.

He rode three miles oblivious to his surroundings, while he went carefully over his acquaintance—no, his friendship—with Billy Louise, and tried to guess what she would say when he

told her what he had wanted to tell her for a year now; what he had been hungry to tell her. Sometimes he smiled a little, and sometimes he looked gloomy. He ended by hurrying the cattle down the cañon so that he might ride on to the Wolverine that night.

It put new heart into Ward to ride down the bluff and see the wink of the cabin window once more. He threw back his shoulders and lifted up his voice in the doggerel that had come to be a sort of bond between the two:

"I'm on my best horse and a-comin' on the  
run,  
Best blamed cowboy that ever pulled a gun."

A yellow square opened in the cabin's side, and a figure stood outlined against the shining background. Ward laughed happily.

"Coma ti yi youpy, youpy-a, youpy-a," he sang uproariously.

Billy Louise turned her head toward the interior of the cabin, and then left the light and merged into the darkness without. Ward risked a broken neck and went down the last bit of slope as if he were trying to head a steed. By the time he galloped up to the gate, Billy Louise was leaning over it. He could see her form dimly there.

"Lo, Bill," he said softly, and slid out of the saddle and went up to her. "How you was, already?" Again his voice was like a kiss.

"Lo, Ward!"—in a tone that returned the kiss. "Don't know whether the stopping's good to-night or not. We've quit taking in tramps. Where the dickens have you been for the last ten years?"

"I felt like it was twenty," Ward affirmed. "Do I get any supper, William? I like to have ridden my horse to a standstill getting here to-night—know that? I hope you appreciate the fact——"

"It's a wonder you wouldn't have started a little sooner, then," Billy

Louise retorted. "Along about Christmas, for instance."

"Wasn't my fault I didn't, William. Think I've got nothing to do but chase around the country calling on young ladies? I've been a wage slave, Bill-Loo. Come on while I put up my horse. Poor devil, I drove cattle from Junkins' place with him—and they weren't what you could call trail broke, either. And then I came on down here. I've been in the saddle since daylight, young lady—and Rattler's been under it."

"Well, I'm very sure that it is not my fault," Billy Louise disclaimed as she walked beside him to the stable.

"I'm not so sure of that. I might produce some pretty strong evidence that the last twenty miles is your fault. Say, you didn't know I've gone into the cow business myself, did you, William? I've been working like one son of a gun all fall and winter, and I'm in the cattle-king class—to the extent of twelve head. I knew you were crazy to hear the glad tidings, so I tried to kill off a horse to get here and tell you. You and me'll be running a wagon and full crew in another year, don't you reckon? And send reps over into Wyoming and around, to look after our interests!" He laughed at himself with a perfect understanding of his own insignificance as a cattle owner, and Billy Louise laughed with him—though not at him, for it seemed to her that Ward had done well, considering his small opportunities.

He did not do so very well when it came to telling Billy Louise "something." Twice during his visit he had to admit to himself that the play came right to tell her. And both times Ward shied like a horse in the moonlight. For all that he sang about half the way home, the next day, and for the rest of the way he built castles; which proves that his visit had not been disappointing.

He rode out into the pasture where



his cattle were grazing, and sat looking at them while he smoked a cigarette; and while he smoked that small herd grew and multiplied before the eyes of his imagination, until he needed a full crew of riders to take care of them. He shipped a trainload of beef to Chicago before he threw away the cigarette stub, and he laughed to himself when he rode back to the log cabin in the grove of quaking aspens.

"I'm getting my money's worth out of that bunch, just in the fun of planning ahead," he realized while he whittled shavings from the edge of a cracker box to start his supper fire. "A few cows and calves make the best daydream material I've struck yet; wish I had more of the same. I'd make old Dame Fortune put a different brand on me, pronto. She could spell it with an F—but it wouldn't be football. If the cards fall right," he mused when the fire was hot and crackling, and while he sliced bacon with his pocket-knife, "I'll get the best of her yet. And——" His coffee pail boiled over and interrupted him. He burned his fingers before he slid the pail to a cooler spot, and after that he thought of the joys of having a certain gray-eyed girl for his housekeeper; and for a time he forgot about his newly acquired herd.

And then his daydreams received a severer jolt, and one more lasting. He began to realize something that he had always known—that there is something more to the cattle business than branding the calves and selling the beef.

When the first calf went to dull the hunger of the wolves that howled o' nights among the rocks and stunted pines on Bannock Butte, Ward swore a good deal and resolved to ride with his rifle tied on the saddle hereafter. Also, he went back immediately and got a little fat, blue bottle of strychnine, returned and "salted" the small remnant of the carcass. It was no part

of his dreams to have the profit chewed off his little herd by wolves.

When the second calf was pulled down in spite of the mother's defense within half a mile of his cabin, Ward postponed a trip he had meant to make to the Wolverine, and went out on the trail of the wolves. In the loose soil of the lower ridge he tracked them easily, and rode at a shuffling trot along the cow trail they had followed, his eyes keen for some further sign of them. He guessed that there would be at least one den farther up in the gulch that opened out ahead, and if he could find it and get the pups—well, the bounty on one litter would even his loss, even if he were not lucky enough to get one of the old ones. He had a shovel tied to the saddle under his left leg to use in case he found a den.

So, planning a crusade against these enemies to his enterprise, he picked his way slowly up the side of the gully that had a little stream wandering through rocks at the bottom. His eyes, that Billy Louise had found so quick and keen, noted every little jutting shelf of rock, every badger hole, every bush. It looked like a good place for dens of wolf or coyote. And with the sun shining down warm on his shoulders and the meadow larks singing from swaying weeds, and rabbits scuttling away through the rocks now and then, Ward began to forget the ill luck that had brought him out, and to enjoy the hunt for its own sake.

Farther along there were so many places that would bear investigation that he left Rattler on a level spot, and with his rifle and six-shooter went forward on foot, climbing over ledges of rock, forcing his way through green-budded wild rosebushes or sliding down loose, gravelly slopes.

One place—a tiny cave under a huge boulder—looked promising. There were wolf tracks going in and out—

plenty of them. But there were no bones or offal anywhere around, and Ward decided that it was not a family residence, but that the wolves had perhaps invaded the nest of some other animal. He went on hopefully. That side of the gulch was cobwebbed with tracks.

Then, quite accidentally, he glanced across to the far side, his eyes attracted to something which had moved. He could see nothing at first, though from the corner of his eye he had certainly caught a flicker of movement over there. Yellow sand, gray rocks, and bushes, and above a curlew circling with long beak outstretched before and long, red legs stretched out behind. He almost believed he had but caught the swift passing of a cloud shadow over there, and was on the point of climbing farther up his own slope to where a yawning hole in the hill showed signs of being pawed and trampled. Then an outline slowly defined itself among a jumble of rocks; head, sloping back, two points for ears—it might be a rock, but it began to look more and more like a wolf sitting up on its haunches watching him fixedly.

Even while Ward lifted his rifle and got the ivory bead snugly fitted into the notch of the rear sight with his eye, he would not have bet two bits that he was aiming at an animal. He pulled the trigger with a steady crooking of his forefinger, and the whole gulch clamored with the noise. The object over there leaped high, came down heavily, and rolled ten feet down the hill to another level, where it bounded three or four times convulsively, slid a few feet farther, and lay still behind a bush.

"Got you that time, you old Turk—if you did nearly fool me playing you were part of the scenery." Ward slid recklessly down to the bottom, sought a narrow place, and jumped the creek, and climbed exultantly to where

the wolf lay twisted on its back, its eyes half open and glazed, its jaws parted in a sardonic grin. Ward grinned also as he looked at it. He gave the carcass a poke with his boot toe and glanced up the hill toward the rocks.

"Maybe you were playing lookout for the bunch," he said. Leaving the wolf where she lay, he climbed to the rocks where he had first seen her. They lay high piled, but he could see daylight through every open space and so knew there was no den. The base rested solidly on the yellow earth.

Ward stood and looked at the slope below. To the right and halfway down was a ten-foot ledge, and below that outcropping a steep bank of earth. He could not see what lay immediately below, but while he was still staring a pointed, gray nose, topped by pert, gray ears, poked cautiously over the bank, hovered there, sniffing, and dropped back out of sight.

"You little son of a gun!" he exclaimed, and dug in his heels on the sharp descent. "I've got you right where I want you now."

The den was tunneled into the earth just over another ledge which underlay the bank there and gave a sheer drop of ten or fifteen feet to the slope below, where a thick fringe of blossoming cherry bushes grew close and hid the ledge so completely that the den had been perfectly concealed from across the gulch. It was a case where the shovel was needed. Ward "flagged" the den by throwing his coat down before the opening, and went back to where Rattler waited. He was jubilant over his good luck. With an average litter of pups, and the old wolf beside, the bounty would make those two calves the most profitable animals in the bunch, reckoned on the basis of money invested in them.

With the shovel he enlarged the tunnel, and between strokes he heard the



whimpering of the pups. The sound sobered his face to a pitying determination. Poor little devils, it was not their fault that they were born to be a menace rather than a help to mankind. He was sorry for their terror while he dug back to where they huddled against the farthest wall of their nest. He worked fast that he might the sooner end their discomfort, and his forehead was puckered into a frown at the harsh law of life that must preserve its existence at the expense of some other life. Yet he dug back and back, burrowing into the bank toward the whimpering. It was farther than he had thought, but the soil was a loose sand and gravel, and he made good headway.

Then, laying down his shovel, he reached into a hysterical squirm of soft hair and sharp little teeth that snapped at his gloved hand. One by one he hauled them out, whining, biting, struggling like the little savages they were. One by one he sent them into oblivion with a sharp tap of the shovel. There were eight, just big enough to make little, investigative trips outside the den when all was quiet. Ward was glad he had found them and wiped them out of existence, but it had not been pleasant work.

He wiped the perspiration off his face with his handkerchief, pushed his hat to the back of his head, and sat down on the ledge beside the pile of dirt he had thrown out. He felt the need of a smoke, after all that.

It was while he was smoking and resting that he became first conscious of the pile of dirt as something more than the obstacle between himself and the wolf pups. He blew a little cloud of smoke from his mouth, leaned and lifted a handful of sand, picked something out of it, and looked at it intently. He said "Hmph!" skeptically. He turned his head and stared at the ledge above and to the right of him,

twisted half around, and scanned the steep slope immediately above the earth bank, and then looked at the gulch beneath him. He took his cigarette from his lips, said "Well, I'll be darned!" and put it back again. With his forefinger he turned over the small, rusty lump the size of a pea, wiped it upon his sleeve, and bent over it eagerly, holding it so that the light struck it revealingly. His face glowed. Save the want of tenderness in his eyes, he looked as though Billy Louise stood before him; the same guarded gladness, the same intent eagerness.

Ward sprawled over that pile of gravel and sand, and searched with his fingers, as young girls search a thick bank of clover for the magic four leaves. He found one other small lump that he kept, but beyond that his search was barren of result. Still, that glow remained in his face. Finally he roused himself as though he realized that he was behaving foolishly. He made himself another cigarette and smoked it fast, keeping pace with his shuttling thoughts. And by the time the paper tube was burned down to an inch-long stub, he had won back his manner of imperturbable calm; only his eyes betrayed a hidden excitement.

"Looks like there's money in wolves," he said aloud, and laughed a little. "Old Lady Fortune, you want to watch out or I'm liable to get the best of you yet! Looks like I've got a hand to draw to now. Youp-ee-ee!" His forced imperturbability exploded in the yell, and after that he moved briskly.

"I've got to play safe on this," he warned himself while he scalped the last of the pups. "No use getting rattled. If she's good as she looks, she's fine. She'll help boost my little bunch of cattle—and that's all I want. I ain't going to go hog-wild over it, like so many do."

He went over and skinned the mother wolf, and, with the pelts in a strong-

smelling bundle, returned to the sand pile and filled his neckerchief as full as he could tie it. Then he went down into the gulch, jumped the creek with his load—and got a foot wet where his boot leaked along the sole—and climbed hurriedly up to where Rattler waited and dozed in the sunshine with the reins dropped to the ground.

Rattler objected to those fresh wolf-skins, and Ward lifted a disciplinary boot toe to his ribs. His mood did

not accept patiently any unnecessary delay in getting home, and he succeeded in making Rattler aware of his mood. Rattler laid back his ears and took the trail in long, rabbit jumps for spite, and risked his own and his master's bones unchecked and unchided. The pace pleased Ward, and to the risk he gave no thought. He was reconstructing his air castles on broader lines, and smiling now and then to himself.

TO BE CONTINUED.



## A TRIBUTE TO THE CANDIDATE

ONE morning, when Tom Shipp was running for Congress in Indianapolis, a man called him up on the telephone and requested an interview with him. Shipp had a busy day before him, and intimated that opportunities for interviews were limited.

"Well, Tom," said the voice over the telephone, "you certainly ought to talk to me. I've known you ever since you were a little bit of a kid. You know that, don't you?"

"Yes," said Tom mendaciously. "I know that."

"And I've loved you as if you were my own son," continued the voice. "I've always been devoted to your interests. You know that, don't you, Tom?"

"Of course," agreed Shipp.

"And always," relentlessly pursued the admirer, "I've watched your career and noted with unspeakable pride your rapid advancement. It has made me happier than I can say. You know that, don't you, Tom?"

"Certainly," replied Tom, whose arm was beginning to ache from holding the receiver.

"You say you're too busy to see me in your office?" asked the admirer in an incredulous tone.

"I've got an engagement somewhere else," explained the candidate.

"Where will you be about half an hour from now?"

Shipp considered for a moment.

"In the lobby of the Claypool Hotel," he gave the information.

"What part of the lobby?"

"Say, why do you want to know that?" asked Shipp.

"Well, you see," confided the other, "I want to be sure of finding you—and I really don't know what you look like."

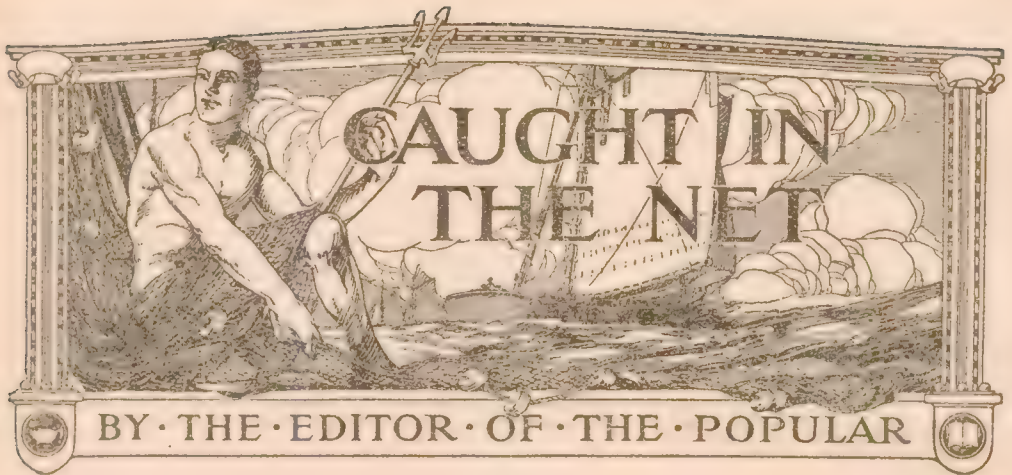


## HAVOC IN THE RESTAURANT

HERE is how a smart man about town explained what a cabaret is:

"The cabaret is the thing that put the din in dinner and took the rest out of restaurant."





## LITERATURE AND THE MOVIES

**Y**OU can see Homer's "Odyssey" on the films, or Shakespeare's "Hamlet," with the distinguished Forbes-Robertson in the leading part, or Victor Hugo's "Les Misérables" performed by the greatest French actors and actresses. Perhaps it is the easiest and most passive way of having these works of art brought to your attention. All you have to do is look—you don't even have to listen. Surely they are a boon to the tired business man—a person we often read about but very seldom see, and beyond all doubt the films will broaden the mind of thousands who would never have made the acquaintance of some of the great standards of our language and civilization through any other means. If you want to know a great book, and can see it on the films, do so by all means, but don't forget that the book can give you something that no picture can ever convey, a spirit, an atmosphere that can only be transmitted through the medium of the narrative form.

The very passive quality of your enjoyment of the picture brings its own penalty. If you want to really get something out of anything, you must bring something to it. To really experience any high degree of æsthetic pleasure and benefit you must exert your mind to some extent. You get more real fun out of playing golf or tennis than ever you will in watching others, for the reason that you exert your own powers and stimulate them. When you read any really valuable book you have to use some of the higher qualities of the mind; you have to paint your own scenes and visualize your own characters.

This is only one of the advantages that will always inhere in the printed word. After all, in the case of a story, it is the telling of it that counts. As for plot, only one or two of Shakespeare's plays were original with him. The rest were all adaptations of other plays that were comparatively worthless save as raw material because they were not written well enough. The greatest thing a great author can give you is the benefit of his own viewpoint, his own attitude toward life, his own insight into human nature.

Furthermore, in the absence of spoken or visualized dialogue, the photo play sometimes misses the real thrill entirely in the bigger dramatic moments. Take, for instance, the case of Hugo's "Les Misérables." This was staged for the film

in France. The best actors in a nation of artists, in the nation which produced Hugo himself, were employed in the production, and everything that skill and money could do was done to make the drama a fair transcription of the wonderful book. Altogether it is one of the finest films ever made. One of the great moments in the play is the scene in court where *Jean Valjean* denounces himself as an escaped convict to save an innocent man from the galleys from which *Jean* himself many years before had made his escape. Read the scene in the book, and then see it on the film. In spite of the fact that you, like most of us, read a translation, and that the picture play is staged in *Jean's* own country by his own countrymen, there is a terrible drop in dramatic feeling, in intensity, in loftiness when you leave the book for the play. As you read you hear the deep tones of *Jean's* voice, you follow his speech and his emotion, you feel with him as he addresses the judges. In the picture you can *see* the judges, sure enough. You can see *Jean*, too, but his back is toward you. You can hear nothing that he says—in fact, if you had not read the tale you would have been hard put to it to know what he was talking about. It is true that you see him pull up his sleeve to show the brand of the criminal upon his arm—but if any one can feel the same sensation of the reality of it all, the same intensity of dramatic effect in seeing that we all do in reading the story, he is out of the ordinary run of mankind.

We hold no brief against the movies. We believe in them. But in the general acclaim about their wonders we cannot help putting in this qualifying opinion. You are sure to go to the picture plays—every one does; but don't forget that there are greater experiences and finer thrills waiting for you on your own bookshelf than in any theater. There is the real *Jean Valjean*, living in the pages of the book as he has never lived on any stage; there is *Monte Cristo*, *D'Artagnan*, and a thousand others. There they are, imprisoned in the covers, ready to step out with you and speak to you at your command. A man's personality is made up of what he says and how he says it more than anything else, and we still must go back to the book for the closest intimacy with those creatures of the fancy whom we love the best.

## COSTLY BROTHERHOOD

THE custom of college alumni dinners is an excellent thing. But the price set for such dinners is a foolish bit of display. We have received a letter of protest from the graduate of one of the smaller fresh-water colleges. It is the copy of what he wrote to the secretary of his Alumni Association:

"I inclose check for one dollar to cover Alumni Association dues. I regret that though my class considerably antedates 1908, was, in fact, 1901, I cannot afford five dollars for an alumni dinner. Yet I think I have been perhaps as successful as the average of my class; even if I had been successful beyond the average, I should not spend five dollars on an alumni dinner. It is true that I have sometimes spent five dollars or more per person for a dinner. That, however, is because I live in a world inhabited by a large percentage of snobs. I am not able to see, however, any valid reason for bringing its ideals over into the conduct of a body of graduates of a college.



"It seems to me that such a body of graduates ought to make themselves felt in the community as standing for something besides a display of evidence of material success. If a college stands for anything, it stands for placing an emphasis on other interests in life. Besides, I do not believe that all, or even a large majority, of the alumni of five years' standing, or of any other American college, can afford to pay five dollars for a single dinner. These alumni dinners ought to be for a larger group of graduates than only those commercially prosperous.

"I raised this question once before, with a member of an alumni committee dinner, whose justification for the price of the dinner was that the dinner could not be behind that of Williams, Amherst, Technology, and other institutions. I fail altogether to see the force of this argument. Alumni ought to be as able to have traditions of their own as the undergraduates are. If a dinner sufficient for a spirit of conviviality cannot be provided for less than five dollars, I believe the alumni ought to abandon the custom and find some other means of getting together. I would call attention, however, to the fact that the Phi Beta Kappa Alumni Association of this city, at the annual dues of two dollars, are able to provide at least four suppers a year at this same hotel."

## WORDS, WORDS, WORDS

**H**ERE is a gem from the New York banking law:

"The term, 'mortgage, loan, or investment corporation,' when used in this chapter, means any corporation, other than an insurance corporation formed under the laws of this State or of any other State, and doing business in this State for the purpose of selling, offering for sale, or negotiating bonds or notes secured by deed of trust or mortgages on real property or choses in action, *owned, issued, negotiated, or guaranteed by it*, or for the purpose of receiving any money or property, either from its own members or from other persons, and entering into any contract, engagement, or undertaking with them for the withdrawal of such money or property at any time with any increase thereof, or for the payment to them or to any person of any sum of money at any time, either fixed or uncertain . . ."

It is an old legal maxim that "not even the devil himself could tell what was inside a man's mind." Doubtless the chief justice could tell what was inside the man who wrote that, but no one else can. Try it. The pages and pages of this kind of stuff our legislators produce are horrific to the man who must spend his days reading them.

Take this part of the sentence: Do the words "own, issued, negotiated by it," coming directly after the words "choses in action," modify "choses in action," or do they modify the preceding words, "bonds or notes secured by deed," et cetera? They might, with equal sense, apply either way, but whichever way they apply makes different meanings. This is not an exceptional but typical case of legislative English, and of a great deal of legal English that is not legislative. It is the difficulty of precise definition, the necessity for many modifying clauses if the meaning is to be expressed in a sentence. Of course, there is no common or statutory law against using more than one sentence to express an idea. It would be fine if we could have a "Conrad," or a "Stevenson" write our statutes.

With what joy one would read the banking laws of New York, as revised by Rudyard Kipling. Not every grace of style is necessary. Clarity, however, is of supreme importance. Stevensons are scarce, but there ought to be enough persons in the world capable of lucidity to find one for each legislature.

## ON HEARING A REVIVALIST

NEW YORK had just been through a cruel week. There had been zero cold, and snow and sleet poured down upon many homeless men. The poor had suffered keenly. But all that human situation, heaped up around him, was as if it did not exist. Back he drove the minds of his two thousand listeners to their own little inner life, to their mistakes and need of strength against sin.

His talk was a set of platitudes and truisms said in the saccharine sing-song of the revivalist. He has given this sort of address for a quarter of a century. He has given it thousands of times to hundreds of thousands of young folks. He is tired of it, through and through. The man cries out for a change. His brain resents the weary track it has traveled. His voice has worn itself into grooves. The carefully memorized speech, the mannered phrases—"sincere solicitude," "keenly conscious," "prayer kingdom"—the sweetly appealing use of the voice rising and falling in hackneyed cadence, the elaborate maneuvering and approach to his climax, the vocal and the facial posturing and posing, these are familiar and slightly depressing to any one who has followed mob evangelists for a few generations. The face and voice and language of the demagogue are alike untouched with fineness, fat-fibered, vulgar. The art of it, the tricky appeal to inflammable sensibility, the intimate asides to the audience, the abounding use of the personal pronoun I, the constant reference to the multitudinous personal confessions that have been made to him, the shocking unveiling of those revelations—all these proclaim the mob master, who is devoid of fine reticences, the man who can turn the laugh, and deal the blow.

How he made one wish for a speaker, freshly sensitive, to come with something firsthand driving his language forward, moving himself and moving others. One who had something to say, out of an experience newly felt.

## ACCURACY

IN a recent number appeared an editorial under the heading, "Selling Cost," in which the statement was made that the United States government had "recently purchased twelve thousand typewriters at fourteen dollars each," and that "there was a profit of one dollar on each of the twelve thousand machines" to the seller. Which would lead a reader to suppose that the sum of thirteen dollars covered factory expenses and overhead charges on each typewriter manufactured. As a wrong impression might readily be taken from these figures, we wish to supplement our statement by giving the important fact that, in addition to the fourteen dollars paid for each machine, an old-model typewriter was given as part payment.



# The Six Ages of Sandy Saunders

BEING THE LIFE STORY OF A MAN WHO HAD THE WILL TO SUCCEED

By George Randolph Chester

*Author of "Get-Rich-Quick Wallingford," "Sledge's Way," Etc.*

## V.—THE STATESMAN

WHO is this John Whittier Saunders?" the public remembered to ask, as it loafed through the free People's Club to see if the magnificent new philanthropy would do.

"He's the cheese millionaire. He's doing this to square himself."

The newspapers were not so lukewarm. This public benefaction was so munificent that it contained everything which could be desired by the most exacting recipient of gifts, and the man who would endow it must be a good subject for comic copy—pages of it.

Stripped of the disguise of his middle name, the newspapers found in John W. Saunders a tall, strong-faced man with clear blue eyes, in whose red hair there were touches of gray; and he was quite willing to shake the public by the hearty hand, as it were, and become acquainted. He had been waiting right there for the purpose.

Shortly afterward, while the public was still trying to escape from pictures of the cheese millionaire's home and family and yacht and private railroad car, J. W. Saunders called on Big Dan Gunning, and observed as follows:

"Dan, I want the nomination for governor."

"Would you like to be elected, too, John?" inquired Big Dan, with a smile in his eyes. He was one who seldom

moved anything but his jaws when he talked.

"That's the intention," and Saunders, a dignified dresser, peeled off his gray gloves and tossed them on Dan's desk.

"Then," said Big Dan, "you'd better get your nomination from the other party."

"So you expect a licking," commented Saunders, and his brows knotted. At that moment it did not seem possible that his name could be John Whittier.

"It's a cinch!" There was resignation in Dan's tone. "The people are for the bond issue and we're against it."

"Then why do you propose to nominate a man like Lumly?"

"He's the only goat that was willing to be it," returned Dan, with the beginning of a chuckle in his throat. "He'll be satisfied with just running."

Saunders drew closer, so that he could bring his eyes nearer to Big Dan's.

"You'll not run Lumly," he declared, with some force. "The party is right on this proposition. That bond issue, 'for the purpose of condemning and operating the internal transportation of the State,' is a step toward government ownership; and the people do not want government ownership."

"They think they do," and Big Dan

grinned. "That's enough. The idea is this, John: They'll take the traction lines, and the short railroad lines and such away from the capitalists. We're in for a beating."

"Not with me on the ticket!" snapped Saunders. "I've had this in mind since the first time I handed you a big check. I've been advertising myself, and this is my year."

Big Dan shook his head, and his eyes seemed to glaze.

"We can't use you."

"You'll have to," and Saunders' lower lip straightened. "I not only want to be governor, but I want this government-ownership issue defeated; and you're about to put up the weakest man you can find."

"Would you waste a good one?"

"We'll cut this short, Dan." Saunders picked up his gloves and slammed them in his hand. "Will you, or will you not, arrange this nomination for me?"

Big Dan shifted his tactics. He decided to soothe.

"You don't want it, John." A very friendly tone now. "We don't want to make a monkey of a good man like you. Wait till we have a chance, then we'll whoop you through like a circus; but this year forget it."

Saunders rose brusquely. His shoulders were straight, and, though he was nearing fifty, he had kept the meat off him.

"Will you secure me this nomination?" he demanded.

"It's too late. Lumly's picked, and they're whetting the knife. Look here, John——"

"That's enough," interrupted Saunders. His mouth was squared, and his jaws were set. His eyes had knotted until they seemed small. "I'll give you fair warning that you'll hand me that nomination or I'll raise the devil!"

Big Dan's thick neck stretched for-

ward. He pounded his heavy fist on the desk.

"No man living can dictate to me!" he roared. "You've been a good producer, but you don't run the party! You can go chase yourself!"

Saunders leaned forward and grinned in his face. It was a nasty grin, with teeth in it.

"You cheap thief!" he snarled. "You send me out of this room and I'll pull you up by the roots! In fifteen minutes I'll hand the newspapers a tip on the traction pool!"

Big Dan's palm loosened from the desk and curled up. There was the pain of a great shock in his eyes. Saunders was a bitter disappointment to him. He had been such an unquestioning annual contributor that he had been looked upon as "easy."

"What traction pool?" he bluffed.

"Do I get that nomination?"

"You wouldn't slather the party that way, John?" There was deep concern in Big Dan's voice.

The answer was a shout:

"I'll smash the party as I'd smash an egg!"

Big Dan, who had faced many men in many moods, and could go deep below words, studied intently the countenance of John Whittier Saunders. There was fine blood beneath that ruddy complexion, and he could see it moving.

"There's no use making all this fuss about it, John," he pleasantly observed. "Sure we'll run you. But, John, you wouldn't use that traction-pool scandal in your campaign?"

"By no means," responded Saunders suavely, his countenance immediately relaxing. He even smiled; that cordial, sunshiny smile which let his friends know the inside of him. He was one of the best-natured men imaginable, when he was not opposed. "I shall conduct a campaign of dignity."



"Fine!" approved Big Dan. "A campaign of dignity!"

## II.

What did John Saunders mean by it? Throughout the ranks of the genuine workers, those who had played the game hard enough to amass money enough to be nervous about unexpected explosions, there was consternation! Here was Saunders deliberately putting himself up for a target, when a brick couldn't be thrown at him without barking the shins of the rest of them. Saunders was a good, tough-headed, commendable business man, who had entered the cheese business with nothing, and emerged with the cheese business. But now he had to go crazy; he couldn't stand prosperity!

Long before the public got it, and long before the newspapers had it, though that means the same thing, those who had large interests to protect knew that John Saunders was to have the nomination for governor. True, he was of the party which they all supported every time the chairman of the committee came around, and the issue he was to combat was one against which every sound-thinking capitalist should bitterly fight; but, nevertheless, no one ever mentioned the Sugar Trust, or the Beef Trust, or the Steel Trust, or any of the others, without grouping them all together and damning them collectively; so there was general consternation!

Nowhere was this consternation more acute than in the offices of that steadily expanding railroad system known as the Handeman group. There, indignation was added to the other emotion, for the fortunes of John Saunders had been almost too intimately bound up with those of the Handeman lines. They had given Saunders freight rebates, for a normal and sufficient reason, which was nobody's busi-

ness. If John Saunders, confound him, made himself conspicuous, the Handeman group might also become conspicuous; and far be this from!

"Leave him to me," said Second Vice President Nelson Thomas, who was a plump and well-waistcoated man, with touches of gray in his black hair and in his black mustache.

Thereupon the second vice president called up the office of John Whittier Saunders, and found that he had just started home in his eighty-horse power Laraie. Very good! With a glinting light in his black eye, Mr. Thomas jumped in his eighty-horse power Vitesse, which he considered a better car. Disappointed, but exhilarated, he arrived in time to find Mr. Saunders pausing at the sideboard in his handsome Louis XIV. dining room, and said:

"Sandy, you're a fool!"

"You're late with the news, Nelse," smiled Sandy. "Scotch or rye?"

"Rye. What's this I hear about your running for governor? You can't go into politics, Sandy! You don't dare!"

"Why don't I dare?" demanded Sandy Saunders, taking the bottle and glasses, to the despair of his butler, and leading the way in to the big, tapestried library, where he sat beneath his own portrait. "Who says I don't dare?"

"There you go, huffy the first thing!" protested Mr. Thomas, with a touch of aggravation. "You have as rotten a temper as when you were a boy."

"Soda?" inquired Sandy, with a friendly smile. "What's your objection to my running for governor?"

"Everything!" and Nelse smoothed a cigarette, with nervous little jerks. "As your friend, I don't like to see you make a spectacle of yourself. Personally, I don't want to be dragged into a scandal with you. Commercially, the Handeman railroads object seriously to

your being made a target for public attack."

Sandy Saunders uncrossed his legs. He was attaining dignity and suavity in these years of competence, but it was impossible for him to sit like his portrait when he was aggravated.

"The Handeman railroad group is a shivering coward," he declared, with a sparkling eye. "I had to bully you into your first good business deal, and I suppose I'll have to bully you into letting me save you from government absorption. I'm going to run for governor."

"Dog-gone you, look into this thing before you get bullheaded!" urged Nelse, panic-stricken as he studied the face of his lifelong friend. He knew that set of the jaw and squaring of the mouth. Sandy Saunders hadn't a grain of sense when he started after anything! "You don't know what you're up against."

Sandy was silent for a moment, twirling his eyeglasses at the end of their black cord.

"Where did you get the news of this?" he asked quietly.

"Regular sources."

"Dan Gunning," guessed Sandy, and his eyes narrowed. "Dan hinted that you'd better take steps to protect yourself, because this campaign would be full of discomfort."

"Mud slinging," corrected Nelse, with a grin.

"When I get through I'm going to draw Dan's stinger," decided Sandy. "He's campaigning too early against his own candidate. You don't wish to see a start made toward government ownership of railroads."

"Certainly not! That's why we're supporting the party and Dan Gunning. Why else should a railroad have politics?"

"If Wentworth, of the opposition, wins, the State will buy up all its internal transportation."

"That's what I'm telling you!" This impatiently.

"I'll give you a secret," and Sandy smiled. "A traction pool has been formed to buy up all this internal transportation, and sell it to the State at millions of profit, as soon as Wentworth is elected. Naturally, that pool was satisfied with Lumly, who could not possibly be elected against Wentworth, and, naturally, that pool will defeat me, if it can."

"Well?"

"Big Dan is in the pool."

Nelse's heavy jaw dropped for a moment, and a black look came in his eyes.

"How do you know this?"

"I'm in the pool myself," grinned Sandy. "Through a quiet broker."

Nelse rose abruptly and stalked up and down the floor, with his fists in his pockets and his face red.

"By jinks, I'd like to smash Gunning!" he swore. "If there's anything riles me it's to be handed the boob button! I thought Lumly was a weak sister, but I didn't think— Oh, shucks, Sandy, we'll have to clean up our politics."

"I've started," and Sandy crossed his legs again. "When I'm governor——"

Nelse wheeled, and stopped in front of him.

"You won't be governor!" he declared. "The minute your name's announced you'll hear a yell of 'rebate,' and there'll be a government investigation! What's in this office for you?"

"Position," answered Sandy. "Nelse, I've made cheese until I'm tired of it. I haven't tasted a bite of it in five years. I'm known only as the cheese millionaire. I'm tired of that, too. I have my eye on a foreign ambassadorship."

The brow of Nelse cleared instantly, and he laughed. It was too long a laugh, and it rankled.

"The cheese ambassador!" he exploded. "To Brie, I suppose!"

Sandy turned a fine dark red.



"Paris!" he snapped, and he rose. "I'm going to be governor of this State!" He smacked a strong forefinger in his palm. "I'm going to be ambassador to France!" Another smack of the strong forefinger. "More than that, you and the Handeman group are going to support me!"

"Not on your life!" yelled Nelse, who had only changed in weight since he was a boy. "We'll play safe! We'll repudiate you!"

"I dare you!"

They stood glaring at each other for a moment, like a pair of gamecocks. The door opened, and there came in a properly slender lady, with clear, level eyes like Sandy's, except that they were brown. She wore a becoming dinner frock of something soft and white and clinging, and if there were threads of gray in her curly golden hair, they were scarcely visible.

"Here, here!" she exclaimed, laughing. "Are you boys quarreling again?"

"He says he's going to run for governor, Lo!" complained Nelse, in a tone of appeal. Lola Saunders and her husband and Nelson Thomas had played shinny together.

"Well, then, he will," smiled Lola.

### III.

The mourners—they called themselves that, so the term is justified—gathered in Big Dan's office, to wail. One wore his hat on the back of his head, and one on the side of his head, and one down over his eyebrows, and mostly they wore mustaches and straddled chairs. They were more important than mere party leaders. They were Big Dan's personal advisers.

"So this dignified campaign was to be a laugh, eh?" accused the one with the hat on the back of his head. The hat was a derby. "Believe me, I ain't cracked a snicker since it started."

Big Dan sat still. There was no more

expression on his solid face than if it had been carved out of a squash.

"The minute you split away from the good old principles you get a toss," observed the one with the hat on the side of his head. The hat was a soft felt.

"Campaign of education!" snorted the derby. "You can't open your mail without finding an argument to prove that government ownership's a frost. It's on all the billboards, and in the advertising columns of the newspapers, and I even found an argument wrapped around a slice of cheese!"

"Wentworth's campaign managers are presenting the other side of the argument, and very well, too," stated the one with the hat pulled down over his eyes. It was a fuzzy hat.

"But how often!" snarled the derby. "Even a rotten argument'll get you if you see it often enough."

Big Dan sat still.

"You lose any time you sign another guy's agreement," grumbled the soft felt.

"It was necessary," explained the fuzzy hat, with an impatient jerk. "Wentworth's crowd is not to make an issue of Saunders being a monopolist. Saunders is not to hint at a certain deal."

Big Dan sat still.

"Got us bluffed!" snarled the derby. "He makes a spiel, from the tail of his private car, about government ownership giving the party in power a cinch on the votes, and Wentworth goes into Workmen's Hall and tells them that public utilities should belong to the people. What kind of a campaign is that?"

Big Dan at last moved.

"Shut up!" he said. The hats all came to attention. The derby tilted forward a trifle, and the soft felt slid over toward the other ear, and the fuzzy hat pushed up. "The only way we can get Saunders' nanny is through

his temper. Hustle up some good husky interrupters."

#### IV.

John Whittier Saunders, finishing his campaign from the observation platform of his private car, at Woggaton, and looking particularly trim in his long black Prince Albert, was suddenly interrupted by a large-lunged stranger, who had secured an advantageous position on a pile of trunks.

"That's a rich man's argument!" yelled the stranger, who had well-weathered features and a conspicuous mouth.

"It is a peril which strikes at the very foundations of the republic," went on the dignified speaker of the day, paying no attention to the interruption. "The railroads alone would add an army of voters to whatever party might be in power. The traction lines——"

"They belong to the people!" shouted the hearty-lunged stranger. "You never rode in a street car, John W. Saunders!" The sovereign people turned their heads toward him. "You're a millionaire!" The sovereign people turned their bodies toward him. They had thronged to the depot to see John Whittier's private car, and now they had seen it. "You're no friend to the people!"

"Get that man down from there!" called the orator of the day, fussing with his black eyeglass cord, and motioning to two interested policemen.

"You can't move me from here!" howled the professional interrupter, overjoyed with his success. "This is a country of free speech! You'd shut the mouth of the common man if you could, but it can't be done!" He could pour words out of him like a fire hose, without a pause for a breath or an instant for thought. They just came natural to him. "I have as much right to stand here and talk as you have,

even if I haven't a private car! A man has to be a monopolist to get a private car! And where does a monopolist get his money? From the poor people!"

There was a cheer. A small boy fell off a freight car. A little, thin man with side whiskers, who had left his money at home without knowing it, yelled "Pickpockets!" and turned pale. The crowd surged away from the observation platform and packed around the pile of trunks.

"Arrest that man!" commanded John W. Saunders, whose snug Prince Albert began to feel tight across the back.

"You can't have me arrested!" The splendidly voiced stranger was tossing both arms. "I dare any man to lay a hand on me! Down with monopolists, I say! Down with capital! Down with——"

Down he came. The policemen had each grabbed one of his legs, and the crowd, excited into an ecstatic state of delight, followed to see him thrown in the wagon, leaving to John Whittier Saunders, as his sole auditor, the little man with the side whiskers, who was frantically searching through all his pockets.

At Jingbury, a cadaverous-looking fellow in a checked cap crowded close to the platform, as the car stopped, and waited for the first words. He had even helped to cheer, on the appearance of the dignified candidate, who was still a trifle unsettled from his experience at Woggaton.

"Friends and fellow citizens," said the dignified candidate, as soon as he had secured a hush.

"That's the cheese!" shrilled the cadaverous stranger, whose voice in itself was funny because of its whistle-like penetration.

There was a snicker, but John Whittier Saunders quelled it with a dignified frown.

"I have come before you with a pur-



pose higher than my own candidacy," he began.

"That's the cheese!" shrilled the cadaverous professional interrupter, and there was a laugh. The joke was beginning to spread. Why, Saunders had made his money out of cheese!

Candidate Saunders, sternly repressing the refractory glitter which began to come in his eye, waited gravely for silence.

"There confronts us a peril which strikes at the very foundations of the republic!"

"That's the cheese!" shrilled the voice, and this time there was a howl.

A strong arm clad in checked blue and white reached through the crowd. It belonged to a brakeman on the Saunders' special, and the knotty hand of it gripped the cadaverous interrupter by the collar, and dragged him from the midst of the audience. The brakeman, who was a rawboned young man with no sense of humor, had him around on the other side of the station before the crowd could just tell where to look for him, and had slammed him up against the weather boarding.

"If you go back there again I'll uncouple you!"

"That's the cheese!" yelled the faithful interrupter, just as disaster hit him.

From afar off, the intelligent voters heard that shrill voice, and they laughed and they laughed and they laughed!

Sandy Saunders squared his mouth and set his jaws, and he waded right through that speech from beginning to end; but he felt, and with good reason, that it had not been convincing! When the train pulled out of Jingbury, he went inside and sat on his hat. The hat went out of the window.

"By heck, Nelse, I'll strangle the next man who interrupts me!" he declared, as he clutched at a glass of water.

"Watch yourself, Sandy," warned Nelse. He was more than a manager

for this campaign now; he was a mother to it! "This is a campaign of dignity."

At Scaggville, an obstreperous drunken man insisted on arguing the tariff question; at Sciuta a man with many whiskers denounced Saunders as a foe to liberty; and all through that day some professional interrupter kept his existence from remaining too placid.

The last speech was made at eleven p. m., and Sandy went straight to bed. At one a. m. they stopped at a junction, and, until three a. m., were bumped from siding to siding, amid the hiss of steam and the clanging of bells and the snorting of switch engines. At four they laid up near a frog pond for the eastbound express, which came an hour late. At seven they pulled into Oosilop; and there was no more sleep.

This was a sample night—one out of three weeks. It was fine for the nerves! Candidate Saunders, with his eyes feeling as if they had been pickled in brine, addressed a few early-rising Oosilopers, without interruptions; but at Honkistown, in the very midst of his opening remarks, a shrill voice yelled:

"That's the cheese!"

It was the cadaverous little interrupter from Jingbury, who had overhauled John Whittier Saunders in the night!

Nelse, the lines of old age beginning to gather in his brow, tried to force a drink on the candidate, as they left Honkistown, but it was waved roughly aside.

"Why did you grab me?"

"Because I'm your manager! If I let you mix up in a fist fight, you may as well quit."

The drunken man with the passion for tariff argument was waiting for them in Willows at noon. The many-whiskered man had cut across and joined them in Kickachic, at about three o'clock, as they circled back toward the city. It was nearing five when they

stopped at Sweet Creek, and here the loyal supporters of the party had erected a grand stand, between the depot and Princess Park, and had provided a twelve-piece band, in red-and-green uniforms. The mayor and the constable inserted the candidate in among the bunting, and turned him toward the sea of bright faces, from which a loud cheer burst forth. It was the best hurrah of the trip!

"Friends and fellow citizens," greeted the dignified candidate. His voice was hoarse, and he felt as if he had been pelted with sand and rolled on barrels for about a week, and in his ears he had a confused impression of rumbling wheels; but otherwise he was in calm possession of his senses. "I come before you with a purpose higher than my own candidacy. A peril strikes at the very foundations of the republic!"

"Monopolies! That's the peril!" interrupted a large-lunged stranger who had well-weathered features and a conspicuous mouth. He had pushed half-way up the steps of the grand stand, and was holding to the rail. He was the expert from Woggaton!

"Get down from there!" ordered John Whittier Saunders, turning toward him with much dignity, but shaking his shoulders in annoyance at the stretch of his Prince Albert across the back.

"I don't have to get down from here!" howled the full-lunged stranger, overjoyed with his success. He came up a step. "This is a country of free speech! You're a monopolist with a private car!" He came up another step. "I have as much right to stand on this platform as you have! I'll tell the people about you, John Saunders!" He stepped on the platform. "You wrung your money out of the poor!" He walked in to gain more lung space. "You monopolized cheese! You——"

Just then something happened to the professional interrupter. Sandy Saun-

ders, with a sound in his throat which could not get out because of his clenched teeth, made a rush at the man, and, bursting his Prince Albert in the back, swung on the interrupter's ear with a fist like pig iron! It would have put an ordinary man down and out, but the professional interrupter was hired for muscles as well as lungs, and, taking his blow with much philosophy, he handed another one right back. It was then that Sandy Saunders lost his temper!

## V.

Well, it was over! The disgraceful brawl had happened! The dignified campaign had come to an end, though, as Nelse had sarcastically commented, it might be continued as a sparring tour. This was the last remark of the nature Nelse made. Silence set in immediately after.

It was very easy to determine what would happen next. The whole country would have the news by the time Sandy reached New York. John Whittier Saunders had indulged in a shameful fist fight, right in the grand stand, during one of the campaign speeches, while surrounded by ladies and peaceful citizens! Was an intemperate, hot-headed man like this to be put in a position to uphold the honor and dignity of a great State? Ha—ha! Manager Nelson Thomas, second vice president of the Handeman group of railroad<sup>c</sup> completed the tying of his white bow tie, and sat down to draw what consolation he could out of a heavy cigar.

"Well, Sandy," he observed to the back in front of him; "barring the remarks we made a while ago, what do you think of it?"

"Rotten!" confessed Sandy, anxiously swabbing at an eye which acted suspiciously as if it meant presently to close.

"Then it's mutual," said Nelse, con-



scious that his gift of sarcasm was overabundant, and that he should repress it. "However, Sandy, forgetting the things we mentioned a few minutes ago, suppose we look this affair soberly in the eye. I beg your pardon."

"No harm done," grunted Sandy, accepting the apology automatically. Inwardly he was fuming like a cargo of sulphuric acid.

"I don't know," grinned Nelse, inspecting the eye, and reflecting that he must also repress his sense of humor. "Of course, the first thing to do is to discontinue speechmaking."

Sandy turned like a flash. His lips squared and his jaws set. His one eye blazed, and the other tried to.

"I'm going to speak at Henneberg to-morrow morning!"

Nelse regarded him incredulously.

"You're not!" he protested. "Why, Sandy, they'll throw cheese at you!"

That was the fatal blow. By the time the train reached New York, the manager had resigned.

Whose name were the newsboys calling, as Candidate Saunders emerged from the depot? Whose name, indeed! Whose name was in all the headlines? Why, Candidate Saunders!

"Cheese Millionaire Saunders in a Rowdy Fight!"

"Millionaire Candidate a Scrapper."

"Monopolist Argues with His Fists."

"Eleven Wallops Exchanged."

John W. Saunders read no more. He dumped the papers in a rubbish can; and then, exasperated beyond measure, he drove to the hotel where the Manufacturers and Shippers banquet had reached the coffee stage, and stalked to the head table, where stood one vacant chair. The toastmaster was already on his feet, and had been making a few remarks; but he paused, as he saw the belated speaker of the evening.

"Gentlemen," he observed, in those unctuous tones and musical modulations possessed by all properly equipped

toastmasters, "I am happy to be able to withdraw all the clever apologies (Laughter) which I made for the absence of the guest of honor." A bow and a smile for Candidate Saunders. The toastmaster had a shiny bald head and a radiating mustache. "Nor can I repeat, in his presence, the warm compliments which I have just passed upon him." Neat work, wasn't it? "Therefore, nothing remains but to introduce him. Gentlemen," a very profound bow, "the next governor of this State, John Whittier Saunders!"

Mild applause; mild, and scattered. Three manufacturers and one shipper rose, with conspicuous sternness, and left the hall. The evening papers had been right: John Whittier Saunders came before this dignified body straight from a rowdy brawl! His eye was puffed, his tie was awry, his red hair was rumpled, and there was a bruise on his cheek!

"Friends and fellow citizens," began Candidate Saunders, fixing his good eye resentfully on the manufacturers and shipper who were passing out. "I come to you with a purpose higher than my own candidacy. A peril strikes at the very foundation of the republic!"

"Time!" called a jovial manufacturer, who had dined not wisely, but too well; and a roar of laughter followed.

A blind rage came upon Sandy Saunders; it throbbed up into his temples, it flooded his face, it crinkled in the roots of his red hair! By heck, he would not stand this! He had been laughed at all day! He had endured, all that it was possible to endure!

"Gentlemen!"

He slammed his fist on the table, and all the glasses rang. He glared at them fiercely. By thunder, he'd make them listen to him! He'd— Suddenly he paused, and fought the greatest contest which he had ever waged; he conquered Sandy Saunders!

"Gentlemen," he smiled, and it was like the sunshine. The good eye twinkled; "at least, I licked him."

Another roar of laughter; but this time it was with him. The ensuing applause was led by the jovial diner who had called "time."

"Friends and fellow citizens"—he was immediately serious. "I have come before you with a purpose higher than my candidacy. A peril strikes at the very foundation of the republic!"

That was like Sandy Saunders. He made them his one speech, without variation, but he had never made it so well as now. It was a good speech, a convincing speech, a speech full of sound, earnest argument, and when he wound up his peroration, his resonant voice reverberating through the galleries, his face flushed, and his blue eye glowing in bright contrast to his black one, there was such hearty applause as had not yet marked that campaign!

Who met Sandy Saunders at the door? Who, glowing with pride, gripped his hand and shook it violently? The second vice president of the Handeman group of railroads!

"Great, Sandy!" he enthusiastically shouted, for he was a man who liked to be heard when he spoke. "Wonderful, old man! I've heard that speech ninety-four times now, not including the interrupted ones, and I thought I knew it by heart. But this was a new speech, Sandy! By jinks, you did get them! When you came to that line, 'deep in my heart there burns an undying love for the sacred institutions of my country'—I can't say it like you do—I thought there wouldn't be a whole champagne glass left in the house; and I don't think there is! Sandy, if it wasn't for that dog-goned fist fight at Sweet Creek, I think you could be elected!"

"I'm going to be elected!" declared Sandy, still stout of heart and holding

to his supreme faith, against his very reason. "I'll have to run along to the car now, Nelse. I want to get a little sleep before I speak at Henneberg in the morning."

"We certainly need it!" heartily agreed Nelse. "I'm going along! Say, don't you think we'd better put a wire screen around the observation platform?"

John Whittier Saunders faced an unusually large audience when he appeared on the platform at Henneberg, and the moment he stepped outside the door there was a tremendous cheer.

"Friends and fellow citizens," he began. Loud and continuous cheering. "I come to you with a purpose higher than my candidacy!" Prolonged cheering. It lasted three minutes by the watch. "A peril strikes at the very foundation of the republic!" Wild, frantic, tumultuous cheering.

"That's the cheese!" sang out a shrill voice.

A large teamster, with a hand like a ham, reached over and got the cadaverous, professional interrupter, and locked a number of incontestable fingers around his weazand.

"Hit 'em up, Sandy!" yelled the teamster. "I got this mutt by the scruff!"

"Go to it, Sandy!" encouraged a chunky machinist with oil on his arms. "We'll listen to you! You got a man in you!"

No one had told them his name was Sandy.

It was a glorious speech, well worded and well delivered, and received with unparalleled enthusiasm. When he came to that line, "deep in my heart dwells an undying love for the sacred institutions of my country," bedlam broke loose. The cheering lasted for ten solid minutes. It was impossible to continue, and the prize singer of the Henneberg Pump Works struck up



"My Country, 'Tis of Thee." There were tears in all eyes.

"Well, you said we'd get his nanny with his temper," growled the man with the derby, in Big Dan's office, after election. He pushed his derby so far back on his head that it nearly fell off. "You stirred up that temper of Saunders', and he licked Chicago Pete till he had to be X-rayed to get himself straightened around inside. Then the whole State calls Saunders 'Sandy,' and brings him in with a two-million majority!"

"Cinch," grumbled the man with the soft felt hat. It was so far on one side that only his ear held it in place. "The public's for a scrapper, first, last, and all the time!"

The man with the fuzzy hat jerked it forward until it touched his nose.

"Governor Saunders has stated that he wishes to become ambassador to France," he observed.

"Then he's it!" declared the soft felt. "I expect to be poor, now that Big Dan don't pull this traction deal. But I got a couple of bucks——"

"Shut up!" growled Big Dan.

*"Sandy Saunders: Malefactor," the sixth story in this series will appear in the month-end issue. On sale June 23rd.*



## FOOTWORK

JOHNNY WILLIAMS, the only Hawaiian who ever really reached the major leagues, is wonderfully clever with his feet.

Williams is a pitcher, and in 1913 he was a star with Sacramento in the Pacific Coast League. The Sacramento Club refused to sell him for ten thousand dollars to the Detroit Club, and later the Tigers caught him in the draft, paying out twenty-five hundred dollars for his release.

Williams went South with the team last spring, and while there surprised his teammates with his marvelous footwork. He was able to pick up objects with his toes, and could even toss a baseball. Ty Cobb, the famous player, was late in arriving at the Detroit camp, but news of Williams' talents had reached the Georgian beforehand, and Ty's first question, upon being introduced to the youngster, concerned the footwork.

"Come on, let's see you do something with those wonderful toes," cried Cobb doubtfully.

Williams grinned, glanced around, saw Cobb's traveling bag lying close by, picked it up with the toes of his right foot, and tossed it into the Georgian's locker.



## SOMETHING NEW IN HOPELESS TASKS

A FRIEND was trying to persuade Josephus Daniels, the secretary of the navy, that a third party was a good fellow.

"There's no use in talking to me about him," said Mr. Daniels. "He's not my style of man. There's something wrong about that fellow, and that's all there is to it."

"Oh, he's a good fellow," insisted the friend. "Really, he is. He's a clever fellow if you only draw him out."

"Unfortunately," said the secretary of the navy sententiously, "I haven't that much draft."

# The Hole Card of the "Spink"

By Raymond T. Ashley

A bit of real life staged in the shadow of the most God-forsaken of human monuments—the rain-washed dump of an abandoned mine, with its warped, whitened windlass frame gaunt against the clouds

THREE of us, "Piccolo Dan" Breen, Steve Collier, and I, who was known to them, and who shall be known to you, as "the Professor," had a cabin together during the hard winter immediately following the "boom" in Goldfield. Winter had caught us unprepared—real, biting, desert winter, with a foot of snow, and wood as scarce as whisky in a Pah-Ute camp. The big strike was on, and Steve and I, being hard-rock miners, were for the nonce dependent upon our good friend, Piccolo Dan, who followed the fascinating pursuit of pawing cards out of a faro layout at six dollars per day.

Having exhausted all known topics of conversation, I took refuge in trying to worm a story out of Steve by the age-old method of administering bromides.

"Human nature," I began, with ponderous wisdom, "is a mine that has this Mohawk, out here, skinned a mile! There's more real romance in any old desert rat you or I know than there is in any book ever pulled, if a fellow could only get at it!"

Stephen rose to the bait like a widow to a stock certificate. "Ah-h, sho'," he scoffed. "Romance died away back there in the Paleozoic, when you were a six-legged what-you-may-call-it, and Dan was a rackabeebob—the next thing I know, you will be telling me that a faro dealer has a heart!"

"He has!" I stated positively.

"Yes," Steve rejoined; "yes, he has—and it's about the size of a twenty-two bullet!"

I glanced across the red-hot stove at Piccolo Dan, to observe the effect of all this; it was not usual for him to sit silent when there was any comedy directed his way. Piccolo—he had acquired the sobriquet through some little matter of not being able to play that instrument—did not pay the slightest attention to us; he sat bowed over, holding into the circle of light from the open stove an old magazine he had been tearing apart and feeding to the flames. The magazine was opened at a front advertising page—one of those "ads" telling of the remarkable merits and ridiculous price of a pictorial history of the world. I was about to address Dan, but I felt Steve's hand upon my arm, and kept silent.

Steve rose quietly, went to the door, opened it, and a gust of wind lowered the temperature to zero.

"Whew, she's a buster!" he declared.

Piccolo Dan finally awoke. "Shut the door," he remarked; "and shut your mouth! I'm making a hypological study; a hypological study on women, basing my observations on this here picture here."

Now, a "hypological study," whatever it is, has potentialities. I reached out my hand for the magazine, glanced at it without comment, and passed it



on to Steve. At the top of the page was a photographic reproduction of a famous painting—"Napoleon Before the Spink," Collier spelled out painfully, as he returned the periodical to the "hypologist" and devoted himself to the careful shaving of a plug of "Westover" into his faithful, blackened brier. Dan lit the candle, and once more became utterly lost in contemplation of the printed page.

Finally Steve was moved to caustic comment. "Well, bust it!" he commanded. "Tell Stevie—maybe it'd help you to get it off your chest!"

"You go to the devil!" Dan remarked pleasantly. "I was just thinking about that there rock Spink; did you get the smile on her, and the kinda contented, kittylike way she sets there in the sand? What a hole card she must have held, eh! And I couldn't look that way unless I had four aces up and the joker buried, and neither could you!"

"Don't want to look like that," Steve was prompt in rebuttal; "don't want to look like no rock spink! All I want is a even break at Tlingit Jim's idea of heaven—a bottle of whisky and the grease box full!"

"Yes, sure! But could you play the game on an empty bottle, with the grease box holding only an overdone smell of last winter's fish? No, you couldn't; and neither could I—we'd squeal; but a woman can; the right kind of a woman, I mean!"

"It is a long time now since it all happened, so I'll open my trap for the first time, and tell you what this here Spink set me to cogitatin' on." And he began his story.

"You'll know just about when it happened if I say that it was some little time before or after the railroad built into Ouray and commenced civilizing it, which is the time men begin to lock their cabins in the mining country!

"Mineral Point, up at timber line, in the lee of Engineer Mountain, had a little boom started, so I went up, built me a big cabin out of spruce logs, and spread a faro board in the Miner's Rest.

"The camp consisted of a dozen or two houses, all of rough-hewn logs, along a wide street, which straggled across the cup-shaped basin on the rim of which the mines were situated. Down across the basin flowed the creek, half buried in snow-fringing edelweiss, and plunged into the spruce forest below—as pretty a spot as ever a man lived or died in.

"I had this cabin, and as I didn't see any use being a hog about it, I shared it with a couple of youngsters, Jack Harbin and Tom Mason, who owned and worked a claim, the Black Mammoth, on the rim of the world, a quarter of a mile above the town; fine lads, too, both of them—you could pan to bed rock, from hell to breakfast, and not clean up a finer pair.

"Neither of these boys was what you might call garrulous, but they sort of took to me and I to them, so, little by little, I gathered their stories piece by piece; didn't have much of a harvest when I had garnered it all. Tom was a native, born and brought up in country with the hair on, with the wide places he had lived in symbolized in the space between his eyes, and the way he had of looking you right between the face and eyes when he spoke to you—a big, dark, upstanding, fine-looking lad he was, with a smack of poetry in his face and a way with dogs and horses.

"Jack had hoed a little wider row. John Alverson Harbin was his full war cry, but he had trimmed it to plain 'Jack,' to suit the altitude. An Eastern man, he had come into a small fortune at the death of his father about the time young Jack was beginning to use a razor twice a week. On gradu-

ating from a university back there in the trimmed-lawn section, John Alver-son had married the little girl who was waiting, and the trail had looked pretty smooth ahead—until the smash came; cashier withered, bank failed, the same old fool story you have had in your fiction a hundred times, with the difference that this particular time it wasn't fiction!

"In one short week Jack had changed from a man of means to a man in debt, stranded, with a young wife and no very apparent way to fill the grease boxes and smoke the winter's fish, speakin' in parabolas. But he had a large, broad streak of gump-tion somewhere in his make-up, so, leaving the girl with her aunt, he came West to let the country grow up around him, and furnish him with a stake as it had done for many a man before—and as it hadn't done for many a other!

"It was all in the game with me and Tom; we'd been broke all our lives, and it didn't matter a chunk of fool's gold to us whether our stack of chips reached the ceiling or was wiped out down to the oilcloth; but with Jack it was different—he had to make good, and the shifts he used to put in on that hole in the ground of theirs made my bones ache in sympathy.

"Day after day those two would climb the hill to the bull-quartz reef that formed their section of the horizon, and Jack would be back at dark, hands blistered, dragging his feet about two yards behind him. Then, at night, tired as he was, he would set for hours, gnawing at his penholder like a beaver at a hemlock, trying to write some word to the girl to keep up her courage.

"She must have had a modicum of that there gumption of her own, because in every mail old Bill, the mule skinner, would bring in on his 'pony ex,' would come a fat letter for Jack that would make him smile with his eyes—and make him try harder to drill

the bottom out of the shaft the next day.

"But Jack was tying into it too hard. The boys were taking out a little money from a foot-wall streak of low-grade ore, and there was no special use in young Harbin trying to work it all out at once. Tom and I argued with him to taper off a trifle, but we were wasting valuable wind that we needed to breathe, so we let him go to it.

"Tom had plenty of faith in the mine, but I think he worked more with an idea of making a stake for Jack and the girl than for his own share in the profits of the claim.

"The camp was getting busier right along, with new faces showing across the table from me every night; I was working afternoon shift as lookout, so I had most of the daylight hours to myself.

"I was lounging in the cabin one morning, with the door open, when in staggered young Mason, looking like a man who has just gone through a Kansas cyclone—clothes torn, left arm hanging crooked, with the fingers twisted unnaturally, and blood streaming from his face, which was the color of paper where it was not crimson.

"I jumped from the bed and rushed over to him. 'What has happened to you, boy?' I demanded.

"'Nothing,' he replied, in a lifeless tone; 'nothing has happened to me—but Jack got his; missed hole. I was working on the other side of the shaft, and Jack's body shielded me. Come on with me,' he finished, and would have taken the hill trail again if I had not restrained him by main force and awkwardness.

"I made him lie down, and rustled Blacky Snyder from the saloon; Blacky was a half-baked nurse, and the nearest to a doctor the camp afforded. While he was bandaging up Tom's cuts, I got several of the boys and climbed the hill to the Mammoth.



"There is no use going into the horror of it all; you know it as well as I do—neither fuse, powder, nor primers were as good in those days as they are to-day. Jack had drilled into an old cut hole that had missed fire, the whole charge getting him in the face and chest—ugh!

"We did the best we could. Old Joe Taft, cook at the San Juan Chief, found a Bible somewhere, and he read a few verses at the grave—something about 'green pastures' that'd twist a man's soul. Tom cried like a woman by the open grave—I ain't a bit sure but what I sniffled a little myself!

"Well, Tom Mason and I built a small fence out of pipe fittings, chipped a rhyolite slab for a headstone, and had a picture taken by a mining sharp who was passing through. Tom wrote to Jack's wife, a manly letter that told her all she ought to know, with a thousand details that never would have occurred to an old lummux like me, and inclosing the photograph. I saw the answer when it came; a sweet, frank note which thanked us all for what we had tried to do, in terms that showed a great grief and a dignity which could bear it alone.

"When his broken arm was well, Tom went back to the Mammoth, but I could see with half an eye that his heart was not in it, that the place was getting on his nerves. Then, too, a light snow had fallen, and the burro train had quit packing ore to the railroad until spring, so Tom shut down the mine, and went underground on the San Juan Chief, at two dollars and board a day; but he stayed on with me in the cabin—I guess because I threatened to kill him if he so much as suggested moving.

"We put in the winter this way. Things were going fine with me, and play was so heavy that I had bought the Miner's Rest and all the tables, and

retired on the interest of other people's money.

"Summer came, with Tom staying on at the Chief, only taking a week off to perform the assessment work on the Black Mammoth. I was curious about this, because I knew the faith he had in the future of the property, but it wasn't my ante, so I kept still.

"The short summer passed again, and the ptarmigan changed their summer suits for their winter, snow-colored feathers, and the quiet, endless succession of dark, stormy days proceeded.

"Tom seemed worried all fall; I saw a dozen times that he was on the point of stalling me about something, and I tried to lead him on; but he always changed his mind. It must have been near Christmas time when he came to the saloon one night—I was keeping the cases while the lookout went to supper—and called me outside.

"'Dan,' he began nervously, 'what do you know about the Mammoth?'

"'Not much, Tom; why?' I answered in the Maine fashion of replying to one question by springing another.

"'Oh, nothing, but is my half interest in the claim worth five hundred dollars to you?'

"'Yes, Tom, it is,' I told him; the Black Mammoth was not worth fifteen cents to me, but Tom Mason was, and I saw at once that the boy was up against it. I tried to make him take a loan of the money, but he couldn't see it my way, so I gave him the money for a deed, which he filed with the district recorder.

"It bothered me. Tom did not drink or gamble, and never seemed to spend a cent foolishly, and for these reasons I had a hard time figuring out just for what purpose he needed the five hundred; but where I came from they catch a man young, and the first thing they teach him is to spin his own top. I decided to spin mine.

"Spring cracked again, and the snow-

bound gulch gradually thawed, green-ing and blooming right up to the edges of the drifts left by the slides of the winter. Tourist travel was fairly heavy that year—mostly Circle Route round-trippers going horseback over the range to the rail connection at Silverton.

"I wasn't surprised, one fine, wide-open July day, to see a man and a woman ride up the trail and dismount at the log hotel; but I was surprised when, a little later, they came out and started up the winding path leading to my cabin. I had no lady friends in that part of the world—at least, none who were about at this outlandish time of day, as most of my female acquaintances whiled away their evenings at the dance.

"I watched the new arrivals closely. The man, a middle-aged, heavy-jowled old codger, with the pale, flabby cheeks of an office-ridden life, strode along, puffing like a what's-its-name, as if he owned the scenery on all sides; but the woman, feeling the altitude some and the great, big, glorious day still more, loitered, turning this way and that to gaze at the jagged sky line of Hurricane Basin. I found her much easier to look at and a thousand times more interesting than the old foggy with her, even if I was an old fossil of a short-card dealer, with a mind above such trifles as women.

"She wasn't an inch too tall, and if she had been two inches shorter she would have been one inch too short, if you get me. Her hair, kinda crinkly, dark, fluffy, like the spring fur of a kadiak, refused to stay put in her hat, and straggled out over her cheeks so as to make a fellow want to— Oh, slush, I talk like a moon-locoed kid! Well, anyhow, that is the way she looked, with a face that'd make a man go home talkin' to himself.

"Old Mr. Grumpus reached me first, and landed in the middle of his conversation at once.

"I am referred to you as one of the owners of the Black Mammoth claim, my man'—the old gentleman rattled off without a word of 'Howdy.'

"Now, if there is one thing on earth that puts me on my ear it is to be 'my man-ed' and 'my friend-ed' by perfect strangers! I got a little testy myself.

"There she is—look your head off! I told him, waving my arm toward where, outlined against the southern sky, showed that most Gawd-forsaken of human monuments—the rain-washed dump of an abandoned mine, with its warped, whitened windlass frame gaunt against the clouds.

"But there must be some mistake!" he insisted.

"There is,' I bit back. 'It is you!'

"The girl had just come up, and it took her about a jiffy to extinguish the grampus. 'Oh, Uncle Jim,' she said, in a voice that sounded like a caress; 'you do get so tiresome!'

"Now, Nita,' Uncle Jim protested, 'please let me handle this without assistance'—turning to me again. 'I am here to demand an accounting of certain moneys expended in and disbursed from the operations of a certain lode-mining claim, the Black Mammoth.'

"You are here to do nothing whatever of the kind!' the little lady cut in; 'and you will please go to the hotel and wait for me there.'

"Uncle Jim walked away in great dudgeon, and the girl advanced on me with her hand held out before her. 'I must beg your pardon,' she said. 'You must not mind Uncle Jim Daniels; he means well. And we did not come here to 'demand an accounting'; we came simply to see the Black Mammoth—Mr. Daniels accompanying me from his home in Colorado Springs. I am Mrs. Harbin.' She looked at me in a queer way. 'But you cannot be Mr. Thomas Mason!'

"I had taken her hand, and motioned her to be seated. So this was the little



girl Jack had worked for? Well, she was worth it!

"No," I answered her last question; 'Thomas Mason will not be here for some hours. My name is Daniel Breen!'

"Oh, I know you now," she exclaimed. 'You are Piccolo Dan!' I was—Piccolo Dan—and her slave for life for the way she said it! 'You are Piccolo Dan—but I am inclined to agree with my uncle—there must be some mistake!'

"I will do my best to clear it up," I said. 'I bought Mr. Mason's interest in the Black Mammoth last Christmas for the sum of five hundred dollars; the assessment work for this year has cost me one hundred dollars more. The Mammoth has not been worked at all for over two years. Your 'accounting' is now completed!'

"She regarded me with a little, twisted smile. 'But I have received regular monthly dividends from Mr. Mason, of fifty dollars every month. About Christmas time, last year, I wrote him, asking if I might draw some money from the funds of the mine—I needed it to—to pay a mortgage for Aunt Celia. And he—he sent me fi-five hundred dollars. I—I—I'm beginning to see!'

"She was beginning to cry, also, which made me feel like a cream puff must feel after it has been fed to a burro! So was I 'beginning to see'—that an old fool named Piccolo Dan Breen had talked too much with his mouth; and I had a crinkled feeling running up and down my spine that prophesied squalls ahead for the same Mr. Breen when that talking should come to the ears of one Tom Mason!

"After a while she dried her eyes. 'Thank you, Mr. Piccolo,' she said; then softly: 'Please show me, now, where Jack's—where Jack is.'

"Come." I led the way to the moss-grown slope, with its small inclosure

and the porphyry stone Tom and I had erected.

"I left her there; I thought it would do her good to have her cry out—and I wanted time to think before I should meet Tom! Then, too, I thought it might be better for her to meet the young fellow without me cluttering up the landscape. I found out afterward, however, that Tom had worked overtime that evening, and that she did not see him.

"I slept late the next morning, and waked to the sound of voices on the porch. Half asleep, I listened, without being conscious that I was eaves-dropping until it was too late to make a get-away—I know it wasn't no right thing to do, and I've been trying ever since to get properly angry with myself, but haven't been able to do it! The conversation evidently had been progressing for some moments before I eared into it, because they seemed to be pretty well along toward personalities. I ain't much shucks on this here pöetrified stuff, but I'll give it as near correct as I can.

"'But do you not see,' the girl's voice was saying, in the deep, throaty tones of a wood thrush—'can you not see that I must pay it all back now, and that it will take me a very long time to do so? Oh, *why* did you do it?'

"'I don't know—I don't know,' Tom's bass responded. 'Oh, yes, I do know, too! Jack had told me of you, of your fineness and your sweet gentleness until I felt that I, too, knew you, that perhaps I, too, was doing my little share, with Jack, in making for you a home out here—a home where there might be a little odd corner for old Dan and me—we never had one, either of us. And then, when Jack went, it seemed so easy to go on, sending the trifling bit that I could. I realized just how important it was to you; Jack Harbin and I had been closer to each other, than men generally get, and, of course,

I understood that the meager sums he sent were all you had. And I knew the mine was worth it, though that does not condone my fault in the least——" His voice trailed off into silence, and I got ready to pull a realistic snore if Tom should take a notion to come in the cabin; but no sound came for many seconds, when a scared little voice I could scarcely hear filtered through the chinks in the wall.

"Was that the only reason?" the girl asked.

"I heard Tom's chair creak as he jumped to his feet. 'That was the only reason'—there was a sort of desperate, die-devil recklessness in the sound of it—that, and the fact that I, too, loved you; that I dreamed of you and your lovely dearness in the black, mountain nights, when I saw your face in the stars and the dusk——"

"But you had never seen me!" she protested softly.

"No, but I had seen this!"—I had often wondered what had become of Nita's picture that used to hang over Jack's bed; now I didn't have to wonder any longer! 'Jack had it hanging in the cabin, here, and I kept it after—— Oh, do you think a man must see with his physical eyes to know her whom he loves, her whose least little word on paper is treasured in his heart, whose spirit, unknowing, pure, calms him and causes the spirit of the night to live in her pictured eyes? No, no! Then, when you were away off there in the East, the girl I imagined was mine; the wonder girl I held to my heart almost living and breathing, was my wonder girl; and you, the detached, actual you, need never have known. But now I have lost you, and, in you, her who was a part of you—an ineffably dear part of you. I am sorry to tell you this, deeply, truly sorry, for I have hurt her whom I didn't mean to hurt, ever.'

"The words ceased, and I heard Tom

walk slowly across the porch and down the steps. He had not gone far, when the other voice, so soft as the mother chirp of a mountain quail—"Mr. Mason—Tom!"

"Tom whirled, his heels crunching the gravel walk.

"I could hardly hear her now, but her voice mimicked his booming bass perfectly: 'Do you think yours were the only dreams? Do you think a girl must see with her physical eyes?' Judging from the sounds, Tom must have taken about twelve steps when he had left the porch; he made the return trip in three—I counted them!

"There wasn't a whisper for a long time, then Mason exclaimed: 'But I can't—we can't! Here I am with sixty dollars a month——'

"Oh, dearest—they learn it quick, don't they?—'how can you be so blind? You men will never see that it can mean more to a girl to be a part of the striving and the meagerness of the search for 'wherewithal,' than just to sit and have the trophies brought to her feet! We can save and live very quietly, and when we have found that little home, with its corner for your Mr. Dan——'

"At that, I couldn't stand no more of my sneak-thief listening—that last remark left me gulping at a lump in my throat the size of a rabbit egg. I yawned a great 'ho-hum,' and called out: 'Is that you, Tom?' as innocent as a weasel in a pigeon house.

"Excuse me for a moment," the lad said, 'until I go in and kill that old Amargosa pirate!'

"Keep away from me, or I'll trample you sure!" I threatened, as I tied the necktie on my Fourth-of-July shirt. 'Where have you been? I have been hunting you since yesterday noon. Us owners of the Black Mammoth has decided to put five men to work to-morrow morning. There is a two-hundred-dollar job as foreman open; if you



happen to be looking for anything of the kind, speak quick; if not, I'll go hire a *good* man!"

"'You dear old thing!' said Nita, as she followed Tom into the room."

Piccolo Dan stopped to fill his pipe, and once more fell to gazing at the "Spink" picture in the magazine. I held my peace, no remarks suggesting themselves as appropriate. As for Steve Collier, he sat with his head bowed, puffing slowly and stirring the fire with a table knife until the smell of sagebrush smoke filled the room.

After a short interval, Dan resumed his narrative shamefacedly, as one who bares his heart, and fears that another will not understand:

"'You dear, old Mr. Dan Piccolo,' Nita said to me, coming across the room with her tremulous smile, while in her eyes was that *woman look*, that look that never shone for you or me, Steve; the look in these here stone lips that form the riddle of the Spink."

Old Dan glanced furtively at us, and his voice sank to a husky whisper:

"And Nita, s-s-sh-she k-k-kissed me, Steve! Now, laugh, you horn toad, you!"

Steve removed his pipe deliberately, knocked out the ashes against his heel, and rose to set the table.

"I wasn't laughing, Dan," he said quietly. "I'd have kissed ye myself."

"Gawd ferbid!" quoth Piccolo Dan fervently.



## MERELY A MATTER OF OPPORTUNITY

HAMP MOORE, of Pennsylvania, is one of the most prolific speakers in the House of Representatives. So is Tom Sisson, of Mississippi. Whenever a public question comes flitting by, these two fellows catch it on the wing, pick it to pieces, devour it, digest it, and then say what they think about it. Whenever a matter of international policy looms on the horizon no bigger than a man's hand, Tom and Hamp send forth their mental outposts, surround it, besiege it, capture it, study it, and discover all its eccentricities, habits, and profound secrets—and then make speeches about it.

It is a short day in Congress when the pages of the *Congressional Record* are not enriched by the remarks of one or both of these gentlemen. They are hard workers on the floor as well as in their studies, and, as a result of this, both of them stand high in their party councils.

One Tuesday morning they met at their club for breakfast.

"Tom," said Hamp, "I've always contended that you are the best debater in the House. If there is one fault in you, it is that at times you become so excited as to make your utterance somewhat indistinct. As a rule, however, your voice rings high and clear. I had to leave here Friday afternoon to go to Philadelphia. As I went out of the House, your thunderous tones were shaking the glass in the roof of the House. When I returned Monday afternoon and entered the House, you were still talking. That is a record of which you should be proud."

"Entirely so," agreed Tom; "but you must admit this, Hamp: In order to do that, I had to take advantage of your absence from the city."

# The Man Who Disappeared

By Richard Washburn Child

*Author of "The Blue Wall," "Jim Hands," Etc.*

## V.—WITH HIS HANDS

JOHN PERRITON, who had taken the blame for a murder committed by the brother of the woman he loved, had succeeded in escaping the hands of the law. Indeed, society believed him dead.

Furthermore, he had been able at last to free himself and the reformed girl Jenny from the gang of criminals with which he, by circumstance, and she, by training, had been associated, and from whose vengeful pursuit he had rescued himself and her.

"But life does not consist of an eternal escape," he said to the girl. "When I changed my name from Perriton to Pottle, it was with some hope that more than the name would be different. I wanted to put behind me the life of a good-natured man of leisure, an idle chump, mostly in evening clothes and clubs, and show that somewhere there was a man in me capable of earning a living."

They sat in an uptown boarding house, where Jenny and her husband, Henry, had lived in retirement during those first days of married life, at a time when the young farmer, who had once been Jenny's victim in a confidence game, was making up his mind to go alone into the West and prepare an orchard and a home in the Oregon apple country.

Jenny sat on the edge of the iron bed, her hands clasped about her knees,

and her eyes studying a ray of spring sunlight which shone upon the surface of a new wedding ring.

"I guess I'm wise to that," she said at last. "But since you and I have been pals, I might as well be straight with you."

John looked up quickly.

"Yes," she went on. "I know your story. I saw the whole spread in the newspapers. I guess I know who did the trick—who killed the butler. It was Nelson Wales—and I ain't a fool. I know it was for the sake of Mary Wales you took the blame, and even she don't know it. Before we talk about your jumping the town to look for work where you will be safe, tell me this: Do you still love her?"

Perriton stared back into her large, sympathetic eyes without moving his lips. Once more he took from his pocket the picture of Mary which had appeared in the newspapers at the time of the crime.

"I get you," said she at last.

"And what if it is true?"

"She must be told that you didn't do it."

"No! No!" John exclaimed, jumping up. "It is too late now. She would not believe. It would mean exposing the truth, too. But all the evidence is against me. I confessed, and I fled. I was not a good enough man for her, anyway. Let this matter rest. If her



brother could find me, I believe he would send me to the electric chair. The whole thing is unthinkable."

"You are certainly a game sport," Jenny said admiringly, watching him as he paced up and down. "Some of these swell, idle, rich people aren't so yellow as they look. Well, tell me just one more thing. Does she believe you are dead?"

"No," said he. "She saw me once on the street. She recognized me."

"Ah!" cried the girl. "She saw you? And she hasn't said a word! It takes a woman to understand a woman! Can't you see that she still——"

"Stop!" John exclaimed. "It only gives me pain. Why do you want to open up old wounds? I am going away. The first thing for me to do is to build up life. I'm going West, too. I must leave you here."

Jenny, however, had in her little head the persistence and will power of those who never set their minds upon an object in vain. She knew that if John left her, she would not be able to act as the link to rejoin the broken ties which her heart told her should be restored between Mary Wales and the man who loved her.

"Suppose you go West?" she said, taking him by the shoulders. "Listen, now! What sort of references could you give when you went looking for a job? Here in the metropolis you managed to get a good job as time clerk on structural-steel work. Go back and take it up again. Don't go away."

"But the time clerk's job leads nowhere. If I am going into the structural-steel business, I want to learn construction."

"Ain't you helpless?" said Jenny. "Go and ask for what you want."

John looked out of the window for a moment, reflecting on how inefficient, even as compared with Jenny, his pampered life had made him.

"All right," he said. "For the first

time in my life I'll put on overalls and work with my hands!"

With this idea he was as pleased as a boy. "A laborer," he said to himself, "a laborer." And he found satisfaction in the words.

Jenny promised that she would talk with the landlady about a room for him in the boarding house. It was with a light heart and hopeful frame of mind that he returned to the company's office which he had left so unexpectedly when the adventure, through which he had just been the day before, had called him.

Now, for the first time, he met the chief engineer. John found himself face to face with a man whose short stocky figure and bronzed countenance told the story of a life of working up from the bottom of his profession and one who had lived in the outdoors close to the construction end of engineering. Josiah Earle, as John discovered in the course of the interview, was a Westerner whose home was in one of the active middle-sized cities of the Mississippi Valley. He still retained his residence in the town where he was born and conducted a building company of his own there. John told him the reasons for his seeking a chance on the construction work itself.

"Very well," said Earle. "You will begin as I began. There are three departments in this business. There is the business itself of securing and carrying out contracts and buying materials; there is the labor; and there is the engineering, technical side. I learned the last after I was thirty and knew good from bad steel by its smell and taste. Perhaps you'll do the same. Good luck to you."

John was assigned at first to the work of riveter's helper.

"You will have to get used to working at a height on a building," the foreman told him. "We lose enough men

in this work without sending a green man up in the air."

"My nerve is good," John replied.

For a week, returning each night, tired out and blistered from contact with adamant materials to the boarding house, where Jenny's affectionate smile and her inquiries always resulted in laughter which started anew the pain in his muscles, he worked at the hook of the derrick which lifted the steel girders to position in the climbing frame of metal work. When he retired to his little bedroom for the night, he experienced the delicious sensation of physical exhaustion and sleepiness which he had not felt since his boyhood.

"Furthermore, I'm getting acquainted with the men," he told the girl. "You'll laugh when I tell you that I never knew any laborers before. It's terrible that men can live as I lived in a luxurious apartment and hotels and country places, and never even get a smell of real life or real humanity. But these are fine fellows, Jenny. I'm with 'em!"

John was not liking these men more than they liked him. He had a frank way of admitting that he was a green hand which pleased them; some of them sensed his superior education, but they could see that whatever his previous career had been, he had little pretense about him, and in the weeks that went by they taught him that they were willing to overlook his lack of experience as an apprentice, and to help him in any way they could. Finally they took him into their confidence.

"The boys are not satisfied with the lay-off system of the company," O'Rourke, a riveter, told him during a noon hour. "Earle is a good boss, but it's the company back of him. They've got unfair ways with labor, d'ye mind? And if they can't keep their jobs going because they don't get delivery of materials, it ain't our fault, is it? They pay below the scale of wages, anyhow,

and when the whole amount a man gets in a year ain't enough to take care of the wife and the three kids it is hard, and it's due to the lay-offs and the way they dock us for idle time, Pottle."

Perriton shook his head. He had learned that the discontented laborer was not the villain which, in a hazy vision, from his former position of life, where all his information came from bankers and capitalists, he had pictured. Somehow, now, the wage earners, of which he was one, appeared as men only half free, engaged in a business in which they had no voice or share in the profits; and treated like the materials, the iron, the bolts, the bags of cement which went toward construction—like a commodity mass with a market price.

"And it is a devilishly inhuman idea," Perriton said to himself.

O'Rourke stared at him for a minute before he went on.

"Did you know we lose near five men to every building we put up?" he said. "Go to the insurance companies and see what you'll have to pay for insurance when you're working the way you are on this perch up here with a hammer, a rivet barrel, and a gale of wind blowing when you're on a six-inch. No man can pay the premium with his wages. Anyhow, the men are getting dissatisfied and ugly. Fifty of 'em met last night and talked about a strike."

"A strike!" exclaimed John, looking around the corner of the tool shanty to see if any one was listening. "Great Scott, what's the use of a strike—now?"

"It's just the time for one," said the other, clenching his grimed fists. "There's a forfeiture time clause in the contract. If the work is held up now, the company may have to give in."

"But that's just like the thing you do to your enemy—that strategy of——"

"War!" finished O'Rourke. "You



listen to me, b'y! When you've found out the truth, you'll see we workers and them employers is always at war, anyhow. We don't mix no more than oil and water."

"Why not go to Earle first?" asked John, resisting the depressing idea of antagonism between employer and employee.

"Would *you* go?"

"Of course I would."

"Then do it, and tell the boss what case we men has got. We voted to send you to him—you bein' a good talker and trusted by all of us—if you'll go."

"I'll go," said John seriously to a group who came to him later. "And I guess I never had anything in my life please me as much as this trust you have put in me now."

What John's interview with Earle would have been had the two met alone for a discussion of the workmen's requests can never be known. It was the decree of fortune that when Perriton went to the construction headquarters, the president of the company, Mr. Hugh K. Carter, was in Earle's private office. In the anteroom, John had hardly begun his statement of the case with which he represented the structural workers before Carter burst in upon them.

"I can't see, Earle, what you gain by listening to these complaints of a crowd of malcontents," he said, addressing the superintendent, but glaring at John. "This man is one of those fellows who uses a superficial brilliancy to become an agitator among the workmen. If any man or group of men on our job don't like the work, they can leave. If they don't leave voluntarily, they ought to be discharged."

"I would like to hear what this man has to say," Earle replied quietly.

"It isn't what we pay you for, Mr. Earle," Carter said explosively. "If you don't send this man back to work,

I'll remove his name from the pay rolls."

"One moment," said John. "I came here in the interest of peace. I am not one of those who wish to see a strike. It means loss to the men, and in this stage of the work it means a greater loss to the company. I am one of the laborers, but also I am a member of this company of yours. We are supposed to be working together, and I came here on the theory that something was to be gained by talking together."

"Nothing is to be gained!" Carter exclaimed in a rage. "Absolutely nothing."

He twisted his body into an overcoat, pulled on his glove, clapped his hat on his head, and slammed the door behind him as he went.

"I wish——" Earle began, and then stopped.

"I know what you wish," said John. "You cannot say it, but I can. You wish that employers like Carter would withdraw from industry. You know the effect they have on making class hatred and bringing on strikes. The truth, Mr. Earle, is that the men on the job here are just in condition to start an organized revolt. But it is useless for me to say more."

"Yes," the other man said. "It is useless. But I like the way you talk, Pottle, and I like the way you have worked. I have kept track of it. Some day when I have a construction job of my own under way, I hope you'll come and work for me. And if there is anything I can do for you let me know what it is."

Perriton thought a moment.

"There is something *now*," he said. "In the boarding house where I live is a young woman who has been studying bookkeeping while her husband has been away. I think she might help on the office work here, and I wish you would give her a chance."

"Send her to me," said Earle, holding out his hand toward John's. "We will try to give her a place."

This news Perriton carried back to Jenny that night. The girl threw open the window of her room to allow the spring breeze to enter, and then, after a sober moment, clasped John's two hands and whirled him about until the floor rocked with their dancing.

"I'll be earning money!" she sang. "I'll be earning money. Even if they pay in Confederate bills, I'll be able to say I had an honest job at last. I'm going to telegraph Henry that I am honest-to-goodness earning money!"

But it was not until John had left the front doorstep, where, after supper, the boarders congregated in these balmy evenings to listen to the hurdy-gurdies and the springtime hum of the street cars, and the shouts of children, and a brass band rehearsing in a hall across the way, that Jenny remembered suddenly that her friend was in trouble.

She ran up the stairs to the door of his room and knocked timidly. "It's Jenny," she said. "It's Jenny—the little simp."

"Why a simp?" came John's voice.

"I forgot all about *you*. Are you sure they won't discharge you?"

"No, I'm not," said John through the door. "The men say I'll be under suspicion, anyway. But why worry? For the first time in my life I heard you sing to-night. You're a poor singer, Jenny, but the spirit is great!"

The girl, however, still felt anxiety. She had rejoiced at the beginning which John had made; she had not only been pleased by the advance that he had accomplished toward building up a new life, but also because the work kept him from going away, where, if the chance arose, she would be unable to bring him and Mary Wales together again. This was the end she nursed in her heart, and she knew that if the labor difficulty became serious, or Per-

riton were discharged, her hope of attaining it would be diminished. With the keen instinct which she had acquired from a childhood which had always been on the defensive, and a girlhood spent in shifting for herself she now sensed coming danger and trouble.

Possibly Perriton sensed it, too. The president of the company had left him with a sly, evil look upon his face; afterward, when John had gone back to the workers with news that no representations were to be received from them, O'Rourke, an old hand at labor difficulties, had said: "Now you're an agitator in the eyes of the boss. Watch out for yourself, me b'y. They'll be finding reasons for dischargin' ye. They'll begin to dislike the color of yer hair."

A few evenings later, when John had been asked to attend a meeting of the men, he refused to go, and feared that by so doing he had incurred their distrust also. He had been unable to explain his refusal because the reasons for it were based upon his idea that, for whatever purpose it was intended, it would only result in arousing a baneful spirit of hatred and passion. Jenny was perplexed when, after the evening meal, he brusquely answered her question as to where he was going, and strolled off toward the brilliantly lighted avenue.

At the corner he was touched on the elbow by a man whom he recognized as one of the new workers on the building.

"Hello, Pottle," said the other. "What's new? What do you hear about the proposed strike? Are you in favor of it? I am."

"Great Scott, I don't know!" John replied sincerely. "Your name is Brownson, isn't it?"

"Yes," said the other. "Jack Brownson. Come on in here. I'll buy you a drink."

John shook his head.



"Liquor is cute stuff," he said. "It had me backed against the wall once."

"But not now, eh?" urged the other shorter man, exhibiting a muscular arm as he jerked his thumb over his shoulder to indicate the direction of the saloon. John did not like his brutal face.

"Come on. Be a good feller. I'm lonesome. I don't know anybody in the city. If you knew my story you'd take a chance with me, old man," the other went on. "I've had my punishment from labor troubles. It was on account of that I left Chicago last week. You'd better have a drink or two with me."

"No, thank you," John replied, starting to cross the street.

"Maybe you've got a girl?" the fellow suggested. "I see a new girl working in the office. She lives in your boarding house, eh? What about it?"

John felt his fists clenching.

"I guess we've talked enough," he said, turning away.

But the next day, when he was back on the work, he found that Brownson had been given a job which brought them in close contact. Conversation with this new man brought out the fact that he had no knowledge of the city of Chicago, from which he claimed to have just come. By a lucky stroke of fortune John's suspicions of the man were confirmed.

At five, when the whistle blew, one more rivet remained to be fixed in the end of the steel girder upon which John had been working.

"Throw up one more," he shouted to Brownson, who was tending the foot blast, where the rivets were heated. Then for a moment, leaning against the upright steel beam, he gazed out over the empty stretches of space between him and the uneven rectangles of roof tops far below and the thread of streets which led down to the river, above which the mists hung as if they were

the vapors rising from a fine stream of molten solder. The voices of the laborers below attracted his attention to a line of them standing before the little shack near the company's offices. He remembered that it was pay day.

The delay of the few moments in which he headed the last rivet with his hammer brought him to that pay window, below, at about the same time that Brownson, also belated, arrived there. The latter tore open his envelope, threw it on the ground, and, having counted his money, passed on.

John would not have noticed anything unusual had it not been for Jenny, who had waited for him.

"The envelope!" she said in a low voice. "Brownson's envelope!"

"What about it?"

"Do laborers get letters with their pay?" she asked, as John picked up the yellow crumpled paper. "See this white slip of writing!"

Before John could consider the question of whether or not he and Jenny should read another's communication, she had thrust the bit of typewriting under his nose. It read:

Have received your report. John Pottle is intelligent and therefore dangerous. His popularity with the men makes it impossible for me to discharge him. Can't you fix it so we can arrest him?  
CARTER.

"Brownson is from a detective agency," whispered Jenny. "He's got a job here to spy on the men."

"I'll expose him!" John said angrily. "I'll face him with it before the men to-morrow."

"You won't do any such thing," replied Jenny, narrowing her eyelids, and with the old shrewd and foxy expression of quick wit coming into her countenance. "You could not prove anything. This paper is only typewritten. If you used it, the company would say it was evidence faked by you, and they would have a reason for discharging

you. Be wise. Say nothing, and keep looking, John."

He smiled. As she had spoken, he had been reflecting on the remarkable series of events which had taken him out of the life of an idle gentleman, and now had placed him in the position of a laborer in overalls, against whom the president of a construction company sought to devise a plot.

"All right, Jenny," he said. "I don't believe Brownson, the gumshoe man, can find much chance to fasten any new misbehavior on me. We will just keep still and watch him."

A week went by, during which the men continued to discuss the subject of their discontent and the question of whether to negotiate with the company or to present an ultimatum and then strike. Several times John had been tempted to tell O'Rourke that Brownson was a spy, but Jenny had argued that if the detective was carrying reports of the conditions to Carter, it would be a help rather than a detriment to the men, because it would serve to bring to the president's attention the seriousness of the situation.

At the end of this week, in the afternoon, Jenny was working over her entries in the company's offices. The day had been one of those warm and sultry days of spring, and the bookkeeper, pleading a headache, had departed at three o'clock.

"I hope you see a good game," Jenny had said mischievously, as her chief went out.

"Human nature seems to be your specialty," the other had replied with a wise smile.

Now that she was alone in the office, she labored over the cost sheets with a concentration which made the sudden unannounced opening of the door all the more startling. The man who entered was Carter, and with him came another man whom Jenny, with a prac-

tical eye, suspected of being a police official.

"I tell you, we can catch this man red-handed," Carter was saying. "Just sit down here and wait for me a minute. I'll be right back."

"Warm day?" said the strange man, glancing at Jenny's pretty head.

"Yes, sir!" replied Jenny. "Does your business keep you out in the hot sun?"

"No," said the other. "I'm an insurance adjuster, and the work is a little dull."

He whistled softly as he strolled about the office.

"Say! Inspector!" Jenny said suddenly.

"Huh?" the other replied, turning about quickly. "Gee, you're a shrewd kid, aren't you? How'd you know I was an inspector?"

"I don't know," Jenny answered innocently. "I guess it's because you inspectors are such big, fine-looking men."

The other smiled in vanity.

"What's up, inspector?" asked the girl. Something had told her that it would be well for her to find out.

"You don't want to know," the officer said. "Forget that. What are your hours here?"

"I'm too busy to talk to you," she said, dipping her pen in the ink. "And, besides, you won't tell me what the excitement is."

The other grinned. "Oh, well, if you must know, just like a woman, I'll tell you," he said. "They suspect one of the workers here of bringing dynamite in his dinner pail to use in wrecking the building. There's been some sort of labor trouble here."

Jenny felt her heart enlarge to three times its normal size. Her thoughts flew to the threatened plot against John. So this was it? She was sure! Brownson had put the explosive in John's dinner pail!

"Oh, ain't that terrible!" she man-



aged to say, with a wriggle of pretended pleasure and excitement.

"I'll be back in a minute, inspector."

She strolled toward the door and closed it after her slowly as if she had no worries and many minutes to waste on some trivial errand, but the moment she was outside she ran toward the building in course of construction. Panting for breath she rushed into the shanty where the watchman and water boy sat and where the men's dinner pails were hung on nails below their coats.

"See here, Joe. Listen, Tom. I've got to see John Pottle right away. It's almost five o'clock. Run, both of you, and find him for me."

"Anything to please a lady," laughed the watchman as he and the water boy hurried out.

Jenny, however, paid no attention to their going. She was running along the line of tin buckets, hunting for the one she would recognize as John's. At last she came to it. Snatching the cover off, she tipped the tin so that the light from the doorway shone into the interior, and there, within reach of her fingers, was the black stick of explosive. Upon one end of it a bit of the paper, in which it had come, still clung. "If I can only find the wrapper!" she thought.

She searched the dirt floor of the shack, conscious that the seconds of time were precious. The five o'clock whistle already was shrieking its blast. She kicked aside a box of electric fixtures, and dug down behind a pile of empty cement bags in the corner. There her finger came in contact with a crumpled paper. With a cry of triumph she brought it to the light. It was the paper wrapper, torn in four pieces; on the surface was written:

Deliver to George Brownson. Brownson Detective Agency. The Arcade. From Billings & Morey. Dealers in Detonators and Explosives.

"So much for your carelessness!" she said viciously, and then, seeing a shadow fall on the floor, she wheeled about and faced John.

"A narrow escape!" she whispered. "He had put dynamite in your dinner bucket. Look at this. Here is the wrapper he brought it in. Take it and look at it. The fool! I found it behind these cement bags. That's all I wanted to say to you. Go back! Go back! Don't let any one see you here."

John nodded, and was gone. Jenny dodged around the other end of the shanty and ran back to the office.

Without a word to the police inspector, she picked up her pen once more to dip it in the ink.

"Yes, it is warm," said she carelessly.

"Do you want some fun?" he asked.

"Yes."

"Come and see me nab this anarchist with the dynamite," he suggested. "Just stroll over to the place where the men get their dinner pails. Pretend you don't know anything; see?"

"I see," said Jenny, closing cost-sheet book and reaching for her hat. "Go ahead, then. I'll follow behind."

She watched the inspector as he strolled toward the shanty to which the men, one by one or in pairs, were coming, as they made ready to leave for the night. Carter stood watching them as they passed.

At last, when John came, the president signaled to the police official, who then waited until John came out of the shanty with his coat and dinner pail on his arm.

"Here!" said the inspector softly, and showing his badge. "Just step aside here. Don't make any trouble. Let's see what sort of things you bring here with your food."

"I don't understand," said John.

"Open up the pail," the other said.

John raised the cover; the inspector peeped in.

"Nothing doing, Mr. Carter," he said. "The tip was a bad one. This man hasn't got anything."

"I don't understand," repeated John.

"No," said the officer. "You wouldn't be likely to understand. Let it go at that."

John looked toward Jenny, but she put her finger on her lips to indicate that he must not speak to her. To emphasize this necessity still more, she turned and walked away.

"I wonder where Brownson is?" thought John, when the other had left him. "I believe a little interview with him would do me good!"

Perriton was not free from primitive instincts. Just now the miserable cowardice and despicable meanness of the private detective made John's blood rush about under his skin with anger. It took a second thought for him to realize that the four bits of paper which Jenny had found could be made more of a punishment to Brownson than any he could administer with his fists.

"I believe he is still up on the building," Perriton said to himself. "I believe I'll go back and tell him that he has spent his last day spying on the men here!"

As John muttered these words, the detective's figure appeared leisurely climbing down the ladder from the seventh to the sixth story of the deserted steel framework.

"He wants to be sure that he isn't around when they arrest me," said John, returning to the structure and glancing up along the series of ladders. "He's still waiting somewhere up there now."

Perriton had learned to scale these ladders with the agility of an old hand; now he climbed up three or four stories, stopping for a moment at each to be sure that Brownson was not lurking behind some of the piles of form planks which were to be used in making the concrete floors. On the sixth story of the structural ironwork John stopped;

the detective had seated himself there on a rivet key, and was trying to keep watch of the last of the men who were passing beyond the timekeeper's shanty onto the street, which, now that a watering cart had passed over it, glistened as the surface of a muddy river far below.

"It didn't happen," John called to his enemy, balancing himself along one of the girders as he approached.

"How's that?" Brownson said, in a startled voice. "Oh, it's you, Pottle?"

John, when angry, was always subject to a peculiar calmness. His most intimate friend in college would have told any one for the asking that, when Perriton said words to be understood as ordinarily menacing in a gentle, pleading voice, unless one wanted to feel the weight of his fist, it was best to retreat in as good order as possible, but promptly. Now the detective for the moment was unable to understand the softness of John's voice.

"Brownson, my dear fellow," it said. "You have played your game long enough."

"What you gettin' at?" asked the detective.

"Your name isn't Jack Brownson, my friend," John went on. "It is George Brownson, and you are the head of the Brownson Detective Agency. You have been trying to get me into a lot of trouble by putting a stick of dynamite into my dinner pail and then tipping off the police. This was not a kindly act, old top. Therefore, I came up to tell you that you needn't come back to work to-morrow, and that if I ever see you again within half a mile of this job I will beat you into a light, white, foamy froth, according to the recipe."

"You haven't got anything on me," snarled the other man.

"I've just enough," replied John, "to make a case in the police court. Did you ever see this paper?"



He exhibited the four pieces of wrapper.

"We know where you bought it, and when. This paper is exhibit A. Somebody else found the dynamite in my dinner pail, and that somebody is an excellent witness. I repeat, Brownson, that your jig is up. I'm the man who can tell you whether you can or can't come sneaking around these honest laborers again. And I'm the man who can put you into jail. What do you say? Are you convinced?"

"No, I ain't," the detective said, with a string of oaths. "You were a fool to come up here to tell me this. Do you think I can afford to let you get away with it? Not me. I've done one or two jobs in my life on fellers like you, and I guess I can do another."

"I don't see it," John said coolly.

"Don't you?" asked Brownson. "Look what I've got in my hand. A riveter's hammer, ain't it? You ain't got one. Look behind you now. The beam you're on don't end nowhere, does it? Go ahead now. Back up! And when you can't back up any more, and there's a hundred odd feet of nothing until you reach the hard stuff, I'm going to knock you off that girder with this hammer."

Suddenly John realized that what the detective said was true. The possession of the hammer was enough to give assurance to Brownson that he could finish John if he were so disposed, and the expression on his face, purple with passion, set in rage, and marked with cruelty, was sufficient to make John realize that if he were to have time to gather his wits, he must retreat along the narrow, perilous footing toward the point where the girder ended in marrow-freezing nothingness.

As he stepped backward, feeling behind him with his foot, he saw that the other man had picked up a second hammer and was preparing to hurl it at him.

He knew well enough that if it struck him, the blow would send him off his balance into space. Therefore, when Brownson had swung back his right arm and had brought it forward, throwing his ugly weapon with a grunt of vindictiveness, John risked falling flat on his face on the narrow beam.

The next moment he found his nails clawing against the steel to retain hold on the girder.

Seeing his victim's disadvantage, the other man hastened to advance.

"Oh, I'll get you," he whispered, screwing his face into an ugly look. "I won't throw *this* hammer."

John managed to pull himself up on to his knees, and then regain his footing. He remembered the advice O'Rourke had often given him: "Don't ever believe you're going to fall, but if you fall, look first, and find something to grapple on the way. Many a man can save his life if he can only hook an arm over something while he's going down."

The hammer, held in the hand of the crouching detective, swung once more. Perriton sprang backward on the narrow girder top. The swing had missed!

A pigeon flew past the two men. To John the power of flight seemed a more beautiful and desirable thing then than any other in the world. He looked down for a moment at yawning openings below him. He could hear the whistle of boats on the river far away and seemingly miles below. The breeze that he felt on his hot cheeks was caressing; it smelled of spring.

And now all his instinct tempted him to rush forward in a desperate attack upon his adversary. He would clutch him, and together they would go down. But somehow the voice of old O'Rourke was still in his ears: "If you fall, look first, and find something to grapple on the way."

On the floor below was a heavy plank,

the end of which projected beyond the steel beams.

"This is a matter for judgment," John said to himself, doing all in his power to pull together out of his emotions the threads of normal thinking. "In any event, I must go down. It is unavoidable, that plank——"

He never finished the thought. The hammer had swung again. He tried to escape its impact. This time he was too late. He felt the weight of it on his thigh, and found himself toppling off.

"The plank!"

Before he had quite lost his balance, he fixed his eyes upon the end of that piece of lumber below, and, dropping, he clawed the air with his arms, until the impact told him he had landed. He felt his own body bounce and roll. There was pain. And oblivion.

When he regained consciousness, he saw dimly a bunch of yellow flowers of some sort, and the familiar walls of his lodging-house bedroom and the gray dress of a nurse and Jenny's dark hair.

A voice said: "You are all right."

"Thank you," said John. "Tell it in a few words."

"The watchman found you. You had had a fall—two stories. Nearly a fracture of the skull."

"Where's Brownson?"

"What's he got to do with it? He's gone."

"Then nobody knows."

"What?"

"Never mind. Nice little fellow—Brownson. What day is this?"

"Sunday."

"Wake me to-morrow, Jenny. I'll go back to work."

When John woke again, he was informed by the nurse that the doctor had been and gone, and had left word that the patient could talk if he wished.

"Did he?" said Perriton. "He must be a radical. Where is Jenny?"

"I am a new nurse," the other replied. "Who is Jenny?"

"Oh, there she is, right there in the doorway now—the best girl, the best young woman, the best wife in all the world. Come here, Jenny. What's the anxiety doing on your face?"

"I have been worrying because I did something you may not like."

"What is it?"

"Read that," she said, handing him a sheet of paper. "I sent this message to *her*—to Mary Wales." And obediently he read:

John Perriton is severely injured. Now at 177 Moberly Street. A friend of his writes this note. Come if you still love him, and can be convinced of his innocence.

"That note might send me to the electric chair," said John thoughtfully.

"No other person will see it but her," Jenny answered.

"How do you know?"

"Ain't I a woman?"

"Good merciful Providence—do you suppose she will come? Has she been here? Is it time?"

"Yes," said Jenny sadly. "It is time."

"She won't come," said Perriton.

"She will," Jenny said firmly.

It was Jenny who knew the heart of a sister.

Mary Wales had, before that time, received the note and read it. Her first act was to burn it on the hearth, for she realized well that John Perriton's life depended upon no one else knowing that he was alive. Then had come the debate within between instincts that told her to hurry to him and fears that the note was bait for a trap. Even if genuine, it came from a man who could not be guiltless; he had confessed guilt. But a desire to believe is sometimes stronger than belief itself. Mary yearned for some miracle which should restore this man to her respect and love.

"Send for a motor car," she had said to her maid. "I'm to catch a train for the city."



At five that afternoon she came to 177 Moberly Street. She climbed the steps. The door was open, for it was spring. A new lodger was just coming down the stairs.

"Is there a man who has been hurt here?" she asked.

"Yes. Room at top of stairs to the right."

"Is any one with him?"

"Nobody but his wife, I guess," said the new lodger, turning as he went out.

"His wife!"

Mary Wales clasped both hands against her breast from which a long, aching breath had been expelled.

"It cannot be," she said to herself, over and over again.

She climbed the stairs slowly.

His wife!

The door at the right was half open. Mary looked in. The man—it was John!

Then some one came across the room. A woman's hand held the edge of the door. It was a small, attractive hand. And upon one finger there was a wedding ring.

"Do you want the door closed, John?" asked the woman within.

"Yes, little pal."

It was Perriton's voice.

The door shut.

Mary Wales buried her face in both her hands, and went down the stairs out into the street.

In the room above, John turned fretfully on his bed.

"I told you she wouldn't come," he said, with a break in his voice.

*The sixth story in this series will appear in the issue out June 23rd.*



## THE HOPELESS QUEST

THE man about whom this is written is the George Miller who has lived in many parts of the country, having as his profession journalism.

Early in life George was possessed by a mania to find a town or city in which there was not another George Miller. He became peeved by the monotony with which he received the mail of other George Millers, while the other George Millers read his letters and telegrams. He spent several weary years looking for the ideal place.

At last he lit in a little town in the West. It was so little that it consisted of the railroad station and a store, with the roofs of three houses peeping through the trees of a hillside four miles away.

"Ah!" exclaimed George the evening that he arrived, "here at last is my town. There's not another George Miller around. I'll live happily here for the rest of my life."

The next morning, as he went to the post office in the store, his step had a new spring, and his spirits were high. He was delighted with the outlook.

When he asked for his mail, he was handed one letter addressed to Mr. George Miller. It ran as follows:

MY DARLING GEORGE: How silly of you to think it necessary to propose to me by letter! Why didn't you do it the other night when you were here? You must have known that I loved you, goosie. I knew a long time ago that you loved me, and it was the happiest—

But George read no more. Emitting a loud shriek, he threw the letter at the man behind the counter, rushed down to the railroad station, and bought a ticket.

# Uncharted

By Morgan Robertson

Author of "The Pirates," "Jack's Come Home From Sea," Etc.

Seeking a submerged mountain in mid-Atlantic, a hidden rock that is really responsible for many lost ships that are never again heard about. It was the dream of this man's life to charter the ocean monster and save the lives of future mariners, and when he inherited a fortune his money enabled him to realize his ambition, but the sunken mountain still demanded a final toll before it yielded to man's might

OVER and over again he had assured me of the probable existence of this submerged rock in the middle of the North Atlantic, just between the east and west summer-lane routes. Again and again he had adduced the long list missing ships that had sailed from England or America and never been heard from. He had facts and dates at his tongue's end, to the effect that in most cases there had been no storms nor icebergs to destroy them; nor had there ever been two missing at the same time, to indicate a collision. Fire and boiler explosions were possible, he admitted, but could not account for all. Coincidence could not be so stretched. No, there was an uncharted sunken rock about halfway across—a mountain peak reaching nearly to the surface—visible only at the low spring tides in the hollow between two seas; and at the base of this rock could be found the lost *Naronic*, the *President*, the *Cambria*, and others.

He read to me from hydrographic data the much-ridiculed story of Captain Lloyd, who, while in command of the English ship *Crompton*, had reported sighting this rock on a fine, sunshiny morning, so near to his ship that he could see the current swirling past it—so plainly a rock that he forebore lowering a boat to examine it. Noth-

ing but this rock, declared Adamson, could so quickly and so utterly wipe out a ship that no traces nor news ever came to light. Fire, storm, and collision always left some drifting wreckage to indicate a catastrophe; but a submerged rock could rip a vessel's bottom out, and, by puncturing a few compartments, sink her before boats, life rafts, or even life buoys could be cleared away.

"Well, what are you going to do about it?" I asked wearily one day.

"Find it, and get it on the charts."

"How? You can't see it before you feel it."

"Listen! The most conservative men in the world are seamen and shipbuilders. They never, until they have to, adopt the ideas and inventions of landmen. They laughed at the windlass that superseded the capstan and messenger in the heaving in of cable. They laughed at double topsails, which enabled one watch to shorten down. They laughed at steam as a motive power; and they laughed at iron hulls, declaring that God never made iron to float."

"What of it?"

"They are laughing now at submarines, even though a proven success. And submarine builders are laughing at the under-water searchlight, forgetting the penetrative power of the ultra-violet rays."



"But they are invisible."

"I can make them visible by fluorescence. Don't ask me how; it is my secret."

"Going to build a submarine and go looking for that rock?"

"I am, and will take you along."

I doubted that he could take me along, but did not doubt his ability to design and navigate a submarine, and find that rock if it existed. He was an ex-naval constructor, who had resigned from the service when an old uncle had left him several millions. We were first cousins, and I did not like him—in fact, I cordially disliked him; not because we were cousins, nor because we were nephews of that same uncle, and I had been the beneficiary under the will until superseded by Adamson; nor was it because Irene Craven, who had promised to marry me, had broken the engagement when the will was probated and engaged herself to Adamson. For my philosophy, which included not only a belief in the righteousness of the income tax but a disbelief in the right of inheritance, came to my aid, and in a few weeks I was reconciled, even looking forward to the time when Adamson would marry her, find her out, and suffer.

According to my philosophy such a girl was not worth worrying about, even though there had been a choke in her voice and tears in her eyes during that harrowing interview when she had dismissed me. She had also begged that we remain good friends before others—which was not hard, as our engagement had not been made public.

"And you would not wish people to think that you married me for my money, would you, Will?" she had added. She possessed a moderate fortune of her own.

"Most certainly not," I rejoined savagely; "nor would I wish them to think that you would have married me for mine, and gave me up when I lost it."

I did not tell her that I had lost it on her account—that crabbed, crusty, woman-hating old Uncle Peter had disinherited me because I would not give *her* up, and then died before he could change his mind.

And so I fell back upon my philosophy, meeting her occasionally at the Country Club and Adamson almost daily at the Yacht Club, where he bored me into increased dislike of him by continuous talk about the rock, and his self-accepted assurance that I would accompany him. It was for this twist in his character that I disliked him, not because of Irene or the money.

He was a strong, able, self-confident, and masterful man, dominant in argument and successful in deed; whereas I was almost his opposite, not lacking in initiative when emergency arose, but somewhat negative and lazy in disposition, even though, as classmate with Adamson, I had gone through the rigorous drill at the Naval Academy, only to resign, as he had done, when Uncle Peter made me his heir.

As for Irene Craven, I need not describe her in detail. Like all beauties she was, as Kipling puts it, "armed and engined for the game"—of fooling us. But in spite of Kipling I have a theory that the more beautiful, strongly sexed, and effeminate a girl is the less she knows about men; and Irene bore me out in it. She faced me one day on the veranda of the club, and said, in the casual tone we had adopted: "Mr. Adamson says you are going with him."

"Then it must be so," I answered. "Mr. Adamson is always right, you know."

"Don't go, Will," she said earnestly.

"Why not?" I queried, willing to draw her out.

"It is so dangerous."

"No more so for me than for him."

"But he is different," she stammered.

"You know—it is this way. He can

take care of himself in time of danger. He is strong, courageous, and——”

“While I am weak and cowardly,” I interrupted, in a white heat. “Thank you for your candor, Miss Craven. It is a little tardy, but welcome.”

I left her, with my philosophy torn to shreds. Whether or not her motive was kindly and disinterested, she had expressed herself very unfortunately, and I was stung to the quick. Henceforth I thought of nothing but Adamson’s project, though abating not one jot of my dislike for him.

But by this time he was a changed man; he no longer argued about the rock, nor mingled with his old associates. He had fenced in a portion of his country estate, extending the fences as far into the river as riparian rights would permit, employed workmen and watchmen, erected shops, and now remained out of sight for days, drawing plans, and ordering and receiving material.

“It will be a small boat,” he volunteered one day; “just big enough to do the work. It’ll be a dangerous job, and I want to risk as few lives as possible. I’m having my will drawn up, in favor of Irene, so that you, as my next of kin, will not be my heir in case anything happens to me.”

“Quite right,” I answered dryly, in answer to this pleasant speech; “but why not get married before you go, and save complications?”

His face clouded for a moment, then he said: “I am free now. Married I would not be free.”

“But why all this secrecy?” I asked, to change from the delicate subject.

“I am stealing several patents from the submarine builders,” he replied. “I will stand for their suits afterward, but don’t want them to interfere with me. One, though, I cannot use—the diving-lock compartment. I’ve no room for it.”

“Then,” I said, “if we sink, we stay there.”

“We do. There is no escape.”

“Except,” I ventured, “by the torpedo tube.”

“No good below a hundred and fifty feet depth,” he answered. “Over five atmospheres of pressure will kill a man.”

Submarines, be it known, are necessarily sealed up for submergence, the only entrance being through a hinged hatch in the top of the conning tower, a cylindrical protuberance from the deck amidships containing circular windows, or deadlights, for observation. This hatch, which cannot be opened under water, is the only means of egress except through a diving lock—which Adamson had not included—or the doubtful and dangerous torpedo tube. Men had been successfully shot from the tube, I knew, but never at so great a depth as to suffer from the pressure of water, which increases one atmosphere for every thirty-five feet. The only safety, then, lay in sinking in comparatively shallow water, or, better yet, in not sinking at all; and when the boat was finished and ready to launch I went over and inspected her. I found that Adamson had done well.

With a few modifications he had built a boat of the early type of divers—that is, the type which tend to keep the surface, but are sent down and held down by the action of the horizontal rudder. With all trimming and ballast tanks filled such a boat still has three hundred pounds’ reserve buoyancy, which means that three hundred pounds’ additional weight would make her just as heavy as water, and three hundred and *one* pounds would sink her. He had installed the usual gasoline engine for surface running, and a dynamo motor and storage battery, charged by the engine, for under-water work.

There were three stages of draft, light when the deck would be out of

water; awash, when only the dead-lights in the conning tower would show; and submerged beneath the surface. She could sink to three hundred feet without danger of being crushed by water pressure, and could travel fifty miles beneath the surface before exhausting her motive power. She was pointed at each end. In her tail she carried, beside the propeller, vertical and horizontal rudders, while in her nose was a fixed twenty-one-inch torpedo tube, and in her interior, one in the tube, the others on wheeled skids, were five Whitehead torpedoes.

"Why the armament?" I asked.

"To preserve her integrity," he answered. "When I'm through with her I'll sell, or give her, to the government; that is, all but my submarine search-light, and my observer, which is also my periscope."

"Explain," I asked, "all that you can without giving up your secret."

"Very well. Notice the periscope tube?"

A periscope tube extends upward from a submarine for about fifteen feet. Its purpose is to give a view of the seascape to those within the hull when submerged. This is accomplished by a prism—or forty-five degree mirror—at the top and bottom of the tube, and lenses within it to obtain a field of view—usually about sixty degrees. I examined Adamson's—we were standing on the small deck as she lay on the ways—but found nothing different from others except that there was a protuberance at the bottom of the tube, near the deck, that looked something like a camera.

"My light," said Adamson, noticing my gaze. "The aperture is very small, but it does not matter, as by my system of surfaces inside I conserve about eighty-five per cent of the radiations from the arc. Those curves are my secret. As it is intensely hot I cool the lamp by condensed air automati-

cally turned on when the carbons touch. Also—another secret—my carbons give out a light extremely rich in ultra-violet rays, when I want to penetrate the water, though I have not attempted to screen out the visible rays, which are only good for fifty feet or so. As for the periscope, it is the observer; all its prisms and lenses are merely of rock crystal, which is permeable to these dark rays, and its objective is as large a lens as I can get from a nodule. It is merely a nonmagnifying telescope, with a fluorescing screen—another secret—in the focus."

"Sounds good," I commented. "And how far can you see with it under water?"

"I estimate about a quarter of a mile—far enough to stop headway if we see something in our path. And as the light and the observing lens are fixed on the same tube, the picture will always be in view, no matter how the tube is turned."

He took me down the hatch into the boat's interior, which looked, with its pipes, valves, indicators, air flasks, and tanks, very much like an engine room. Forward was the torpedo tube, aft the engine and motor, below the half deck on which we stood were the storage battery and ballast tanks, and over our heads the vertical and horizontal steering wheels, with compass and depth indicator.

"I've installed a new innovation in this type of boat," he said—"electric cooking stoves and folding bunks; and as we'll go well provisioned, the ballast tanks must be empty to balance the weight."

"How will you replenish your gasoline?" I asked. "It's a long trip out there."

"Oh, we'll tow until we find the spot, forty-seven north, thirty-seven, twenty west. I'll use my steam yacht. The crew will remain here, but you and I will ride in the yacht. Irene accom-



panies us, with her mother for chaperon."

"The devil!" I exclaimed. "Why do those women want to go along?"

"To take care of us, I presume." And again the troubled, clouded look came to his face. "It is the prerogative of the sex. They want to advise us, preach to us, and mother us, even when they care nothing about us personally."

Remembering my last interview with Irene I was forced to agree with him. Yet I could not include Irene's mother in the indictment. She was a gentle little woman, with a marked inclination to mind her own business; in all my dealings with her daughter she had never asked me a question about my affairs or intentions. But there was no question about the strong maternal streak in Irene, and I suppressed a grin as I thought of what was in store for Adamson.

The boat was launched at night, and tried out at night. The searchlight fulfilled all of Adamson's predictions. The upper prism was movable, and by canting it downward the beam from the searchlight could be seen in the periscope, white as it left the lamp, to merge into blue, then into green as it impinged upon an object. Under water it would light up the under body of a craft at anchor fully a quarter mile distant, but nothing of the upper body. Out of water it would act like any other searchlight, showing a white beam for fully a mile, the object impinged upon being visible to the naked eye.

Besides Adamson and myself there were but six to her crew—an engineer, an electrician, two quartermasters, and two tank men—each one able to relieve any of the others if called upon. When searching for that rock Adamson was to take the conning-tower wheel, while I would be the lookout—the periscope man—and all of us would necessarily keep our fixed positions as much as

possible, to preserve the trim of the boat.

The steam yacht was the conventional two-masted, one-funneled, square-sterned type, roomy and powerful; and one night, with Irene and her mother domiciled in the after cabin, Adamson and myself in the forward, and a steel hawser leading from her after bitts to an eyebolt in the nose of the submarine, we left the river, bound for an indefinite spot in the North Atlantic, whose position could only be found by careful observations of the sun.

We were an inharmonious muster. Irene would not speak to me except when the presence of others demanded it. I made no attempt now to conceal my dislike for Adamson personally, nor my growing irritability at the sight of the two of them walking the deck and conversing earnestly. I say the sight of them, for they always stopped talking when I came within hearing, and I did not doubt that I was being discussed.

Adamson responded to my mood, and soon ignored me as thoroughly as I desired, while Mrs. Craven preserved an armed neutrality, kindly to all, but offering no suggestions nor comments, a rather difficult position when, as the days wore on, it became more than apparent that a decided coolness had arisen between Irene and Adamson. Secretly I was delighted, and my irritability left me. Was I jealous and malicious? I think not; I was merely human. I had been duped into believing a girl cared for me for qualities entirely aside from the possession of money. I had been dropped when my money took wings; and I had been denied the possession of those qualities—qualities that men prize more than money. Perhaps the man to whom both money and girl had gone was finding her out. Perhaps she was now denying him the possession of those qualities that she had denied me. Alto-

gether I was possibly the happiest person in that happy family.

The submarine towed hard, and steered hard; so it was nearly three weeks before Adamson, after careful calculation of chronometer sights, slowed down, stopped, and ordered the submarine hauled alongside. We were near the place, he announced, and the real search would now begin. He was strangely excited, and there was a peculiar glitter in his eyes that I had noticed when he had pestered us at the club, but which the presence of Irene had seemed to banish.

"Take no luggage," he said to me, "but dress warmly. We're on the fringe of the arctic current, and submarines are cold."

"We were all on the bridge as he spoke, and I went to my room and clothed myself in a warm sweater and "monkey jacket." As I mounted the companion steps Irene faced me. Her face was drawn and strained; it paled and flushed alternately, and her eyes were wide open from emotion.

"Don't go, Will," she said, clutching my arm. "Don't, please don't."

"Why, Irene?" I asked, while I gently disengaged her hand. "Why this rather inconsistent interest in my doings?"

"It is—I mean—— Oh, can't you see? It is madness. He is not himself. He will do something rash."

"Oh, I see," I said a little bitterly. "Do you know that for a moment I thought you were thinking of me? You must pardon me; I was misled by your manner. But let me assure you, Irene, that though I naturally do not like him I give him credit for being an able man—a man who can build a submarine, put his own inventions into it, navigate it, and command men and himself. Being an ex-naval officer I can claim some of these attributes myself, and can act as a check upon him. So, you see, two are better than one."

"But you cannot check him. You are not like him, Will."

"You said that once before. Good-by, Irene."

I left her to fume at the gangway, while Adamson took her in his arms and kissed her; then I preceded him down the steps to a plank rigged from the lower grating to the deck of the submarine. It was a fine, calm day in September; there was not a sail or a steamer's smoke in sight, and on the run out we had met no craft near enough for them to learn what we were towing. So, whatever happened, from now on we must depend on ourselves or the steam yacht; and to this end a system of wigwag signals had been agreed upon—we to attract attention by a smudge of oakum smoke—and the yacht ordered to drift with dead engines. Before descending the hatch I looked up at the group regarding us from the yacht's rail, and the sight of Irene's agonized face sent a thrill of generous pity through me.

"Adamson," I said, "go back to that girl. She's breaking her heart over this fool business. I'll find the rock, if it exists, and give you the credit. I'll say nothing. I give you my word."

"Do you think I'm a quitter?" he rejoined angrily. "Go back yourself, and comfort her."

There was no answer possible to this, though I wondered at his heartlessness. He himself cast off the bow line that held the boat, and followed me down the hatch, closing it after him. Then he gave his orders. The procedure was simple. The searchlight had a range or radius of a quarter of a mile. We could signal to the yacht at a distance of two miles. Hence, we would travel at a twenty-foot depth so as to keep the periscope submerged for two miles due north, thence a half a mile due east, and then return due south for four miles, signaling the yacht on occa-

sions, and repeating the traverse indefinitely.

With Adamson at the wheel, a quartermaster at the horizontal gear with his eyes fixed on the depth indicator, the rest of the crew at stations, and myself peering into the eyepiece of the periscope, we went ahead; and the light of day faded from the conning-tower deadlights as we steered downward.

But we did not need to make that indefinite traverse back and forth, searching for a mountaintop by the aid of a green shaft of light, which I swung steadily from starboard to port by turning the tube. Hardly had we progressed a mile before something dark and intangible showed in the green disk. I was looking at it, and for a moment I thought that a huge fish had swum into the beam; but it remained stationary, a darker green in the lower part of the disk, with an irregular outline slanting upward. I followed this outline with the light until it rose abruptly to an acute peak, directly in our path, then sank to continue in a descending slant.

"You win," I said to Adamson behind me. "It's dead ahead."

"Let me look," he exclaimed excitedly, and I made room for him. He rang to the engineer to slow down, and, holding the wheel with one hand, peered into the eyepiece.

"You're right, I've won," he shouted. "And they called Captain Lloyd a drunken fool. They'll call me a drunken fool, too, until a government craft comes out here and sees it. What's this? What's the matter?"

The man at the horizontal wheel was grinding it down. Somewhat excited himself, perhaps, he had not foreseen that the boat would rise with the lessening of her speed, and the periscope was now out of water. Adamson's rage was extreme, and as he abused and berated the man I wondered if Irene might not have been right—that he was deranged. But when the periscope was again sub-

merged and the rock in view he became tranquil.

"Take the wheel," he said, "and steer as I direct."

I changed places with him, and he rang full speed to the engineer.

"Starboard about a point," he ordered; "we'll go around it."

I steered while he stared into the periscope, shifting the course occasionally in response to his terse commands, but, of course, unable to see anything myself through the conning-tower deadlights. Suddenly he exclaimed:

"Good Lord, look! It might be the *Flying Dutchman*."

Holding the wheel with one hand, I peeped into the eyepiece. The periscope was depressed and pointed to about two points on the starboard bow, and there in the green disk, dimly outlined in darker green, was the picture of a high-sterned craft of ancient pattern, with long lower masts, short topmasts, high-cocked bowsprit with a fidded flying jib boom, but not a vestige of canvas or rigging; these were eaten away by rot, centuries before, perhaps. Her ports and cabin windows, covered with ooze, were barely discernible, and from a few of the former protruded the muzzles of carronades. The old hulk lay on her port bilge, with the slanting outline of rock reaching up to starboard.

"An early victim," muttered Adamson, as he pushed me away from the eyepiece. "It has taken its toll through the centuries."

I steered on, and soon he asked me to look again. This time it was a five-masted schooner, with wire rigging intact, and a few shreds of running gear and canvas showing, but no sign of a name; the slime and the ooze of the sea had enshrouded her. But a big yawl boat still hung at the stern davits.

"Struck—and foundered with all hands," said Adamson, as I made room



for him. "Faugh! The stupidity of man, not to have found this before!"

His eyes glittered in the light of the electric bulb, and he trembled visibly. Again and again, as we circled that submerged mountain peak, he asked me to look at what the periscope showed. Hulks of all descriptions and times came to view, some dismasted, some full rigged, some showing smashed and jagged bows where the rock had crushed in. One was a round-sterned iron steamer, broken in two, with her masts gone. It might, or might not, have been the *Naronic*; there were no signs by which we could know.

I lost count of the wrecks we saw before completing the circle; but there were surely over twenty, and how many more had rolled or slid down the declivity can only be guessed. When heading south we steered to the surface and emptied trimming tanks—ballast tanks were still empty on account of the stores—and when the deck was out of water we went up and burned oakum in a bucket to attract the attention of the yacht. Then Adamson wigwagged the message: "Come close," and the yacht came up, slowing down, and stopping within hailing distance.

"Stand by," called Adamson to the sailing master on the bridge. "Lower all boats and man them in case of accident. Keep a good lookout with all the binoculars on board. I've found the rock and will blow it up."

"Adamson," I exclaimed. "Are you crazy? You can't do it."

"I'm just as crazy as Captain Lloyd," he rejoined, "and I *can* do it. I've five Whiteheads, each with two hundred and fifty pounds of guncotton in the war head. I'll knock the top off that devil's dagger. I'll stop this waste of fool life in spite of its foolishness."

"And who'll believe that you did it, Adamson?" I asked, nearly as excited as he. "You want the credit, don't you?

Go back and report. Let the government do it."

"Forget the government. I'm boss here."

I subsided, wondering, though, at my excitement, and ascribing it to my knowledge that not yet in the history of torpedo work had a loaded Whitehead been discharged from a submarine. Later, I knew that I shared Irene's intuition. We went ahead and submerged, and soon picked up that conical spur of rock that reached nearly to the surface. Adamson directed his men to stand by the torpedo tube, and for some strange reason, kept the wheel, leaving me at the periscope, and accepting my judgment. "Tell me," he said, "when it's dead ahead."

We had been approaching it, and when the conical point showed squarely in the center of the green disk, I so reported. Also I uttered one anxious warning: "We're too close to it." But my words were unheeded.

"Fire!" yelled Adamson insanely, and a cough of compressed air answered him.

I watched through the eyepiece, and in a second or so saw the Whitehead torpedo in the green disk, speeding on at thirty knots an hour. It grew smaller as I looked, and soon merged into the dim background of rock.

The rock went out of sight, leaving nothing but a dim expanse of darker green on the disk; then came a report, louder, more deafening, more appalling than any I had ever heard in my life.

For a moment I could not hear the hum of the motor, and even my eyesight was affected; I could not see the green disk. Then came a shout from the engineer: "Water's coming in, sir," and another from one of the tank men: "The tube door's carried away."

We investigated. Not only a stream of water spurted in through the wrenched rear door of the tube, but another came down from the ventilat-

ing shaft over the motor, while from a hundred places in the shell of the boat came miniature cascades where rivets had been shorn away by the terrific concussion of incompressible water, acting with nearly as great a force as though the explosion had occurred alongside.

"Connect up the pump," called Adamson. But a sizzle and a sparking from the motor answered him. It was short-circuited, and the pump could not be connected. Neither could we maintain headway and steer to the surface, for the gasoline engine was not available under water on account of the exhaust.

I did not look into the periscope again, and do not know what happened to the rock; I only knew that something very serious had happened to us. The depth indicator showed that we were sinking; but, as the storage battery was still intact, the light did not go out.

The trimming tanks were emptied, to no avail; we still sank slowly. The hand pump was manned, but could not be worked against the increased pressure of water. We dragged forward the four remaining torpedoes and shot them out, to expend their weight; but the depth indicator still traveled around the dial until, when it registered a little over a hundred, a jar apprised us that we had struck bottom. The boat canted a little on the uneven bed, but as the storage-battery jars were designed to withstand a tilt of forty-five degrees before spilling their contents of sulphuric acid, there was no present danger of chlorine gas—battery gas, as enlisted men call it.

Adamson sat down on a torpedo skid and covered his eyes with his hands while I looked at him. When he removed his hands he was smiling, wanly and wearily.

"I've saved the lives," he said, "of hundreds of the born, and thousands of the unborn. I've demolished the Crompton Rock."

"You mean," I answered coldly, "that

you have murdered seven men and committed suicide."

"Suicide, yes; murder, no," he answered. "Let's see that tube."

The men had closed the forward door, and no water now came in; only the inner door leaked; but the streams from the ventilator and other ruptures were filling the boat. Adamson's orders to his men were now terse and commanding.

"One by one," he said, "you will take a rubber life buoy into the tube, holding it ahead of you. You will be ejected like a torpedo. You will slip the life buoy under your arms as you go out, float to the surface, and be picked up by the boats."

They demurred, but Adamson won. Man after man crawled into the tube, took a long breath before being flooded, and went out before a blast of compressed air strong enough to overcome the leakage in the rear door. When all had gone, Adamson sat down on his skid and looked at me. I stood up and looked at him.

"You go next, Will," he said, "but as there is a little time before the salt water reaches the acid, I want to talk with you."

"Go as far as you like," I answered, "but, as I am your kind—an Annapolis graduate, there is no surety of my being next. The last man cannot eject himself. We'll draw lots."

"No," he said, with his wan smile, "you will go. You will go back to the girl you love, who loves you, and who despises me."

"What!" I exclaimed.

"Go back to her," he repeated. "Do you think I have not seen through you both? We often understand others better than we understand ourselves. You thought you disliked me and were indifferent to her. Not at all; you were piqued, disappointed, jealous. You love her and want her. And she loves every hair on your head."

"She loves the money," I answered bitterly, "and followed it."

"No, Will. She drove it back to you. The possession of it only gave me the nerve to ask for her. I always wanted her. But I was honest, and told her the terms of the will—that the money would revert to you in case I married. She accepted me for that reason. She was willing to sacrifice herself for you."

"Why," I asked, "did she not let you marry some one else?"

"She knew very well that I would never marry any one else. On my part, I hoped to win her regard. I hoped to do something worth while. I wanted to discover this rock. But I realized when I saw her talking to you that nothing I could do would win her. So I did not care what happened to me. I do not care to live without her, and I do not care to live with her, and see her miserable."

"But you willed her the money."

"I neglected to sign the will. It is just as well. Come into the tube!"

He arose and led me, dazed and

doubting, to the torpedo tube, handed me a flexible life buoy, and was about to push me in, when I roused myself.

"Adamson," I said brokenly, while I gripped his hand. "I've misjudged you. Will you forgive me? I'm sorry."

"Of course. It's all right. Good-by, Will. Be good to Irene."

I crawled into the tube with the life buoy. He closed the rear door on me, and I filled my lungs with air. Then the tube filled with water, the forward door was opened, and my eardrums nearly burst from the pressure of air as I shot out into the sea. I remember very little of my sensations; I know that I slipped the life buoy around my waist, and swam feebly toward a faint light, or lesser darkness, which must have been the surface, though it seemed beneath me. The next I knew, my head was out of water, and I was trying to choke my lungs free and breathe.

And the next I knew I was in my berth aboard the yacht, with Irene bending over me.

**"War: Personally Conducted" is the title of a new novel by Clarence L. Cullen which will be published in two parts in the POPULAR. The first part will appear in the issue out June 23rd.**



## THE DECIDING VOICE

**I**N a business men's club in a Western town there sprang up two factions, one which criticized the steward because he did not provide the members with good meals, and one which defended him hotly. -

The dispute got fiercer and fiercer. Half the club wanted to fire the steward at once. The other half said he was efficient.

Then, without warning, the steward himself decided the momentous question.

One day at lunch time a member of the club asked a waiter:

"Where's the steward?"

"He ain't here," replied the waiter. "He said he was going down the street to get something good to eat."



# M i s s i n g

By E. Phillips Oppenheim

*Author of "The Lighted Way," "The Malefactor," Etc.*

*(In Four Parts—Part Four.)*

## CHAPTER XXIX.

A COLD twilight had fallen upon the land when Hamel left the Tower that evening and walked briskly along the footway to the hall. Little patches of mist hung over the creeks; the sky was almost frosty. The lights from St. David's Hall shone like cheerful beacons before him. He hastened up the stone steps, crossed the terrace, and passed into the hall. A servant conducted him at once to the drawing-room. Mrs. Fentolin, in a pink evening dress, with a pink ornament in her hair, held out both her hands. In the background, Mr. Fentolin, in his queerly cut evening clothes, sat with folded arms, leaning back in his carriage. He listened grimly to his sister-in-law as she stood with Hamel's hands in hers.

"My dear Mr. Hamel!" she exclaimed. "How perfectly charming of you to come up and relieve our sad loneliness a little! Delightful, I call it, of you. I was just saying so to Miles."

Hamel looked around the room. Already his heart was beginning to sink.

"Miss Fentolin is well, I hope?" he asked.

"Well, but a very naughty girl," her mother declared. "I let her go to Lady Saxthorpe's to lunch, and now we have had simply the firmest letter from Lady

Saxthorpe. They insist upon keeping Esther to dine and sleep. I have had to send her evening clothes, but you can't tell, Mr. Hamel, how I miss her."

Hamel's disappointment was a little too obvious to pass unnoticed. There was a shade of annoyance, too, in his face. Mr. Fentolin smoothly intervened.

"Let us be quite candid with Mr. Hamel, dear Florence," he begged. "I have spoken to my sister-in-law and told her the substance of our conversation this morning," he proceeded, wheeling his chair nearer to Hamel. "She is thunderstruck. She wishes to reflect, to consider. Esther chanced to be away. We have encouraged her absence for a few more hours."

"I hope, Mrs. Seymour," Hamel said simply, "that you will give her to me. I am not a rich man, but I am fairly well off. I should be willing to live exactly where Esther wishes, and I would do my best to make her happy."

Mrs. Seymour opened her lips once and closed them again. She laughed a little—a high-pitched, semi-hysterical laugh. The hand which gripped her fan was straining so that the blue veins stood out almost like whipcord.

"Esther is very young, Mr. Hamel. We must talk this over. You have known her for such a very short time."

A servant announced dinner, and Hamel offered his arm to his hostess.

"Is Gerald away, too?" he asked.

"We do, indeed, owe you our apologies," Mr. Fentolin declared. "Gerald is spending a couple of days at the Dormy House at Brancaster—a golf arrangement made some time back."

"He promised to play with me to-morrow," Hamel remarked thoughtfully. "He said nothing about going away."

"I fear that like most young men of his age he has little memory," Mr. Fentolin sighed. "However, he will be back to-morrow or the next day. I owe you my apologies, Mr. Hamel, for our lack of young people. We must do our best to entertain our guest, Florence. You must be at your best, dear. You must tell him some of those capital stories of yours."

Mrs. Seymour shivered for a moment. Hamel, as he handed her to her place, was struck by a strange look which she threw upon him, half furtive, full of pain. Her hands almost clung to his. She slipped a little, and he held her tightly. Then he was suddenly conscious that something hard was being pressed into his palm. He drew his hand away at once.

"You seem a little unsteady this evening, my dear Florence," Mr. Fentolin remarked, peering across the round table.

She eyed him nonchalantly enough.

"The floor is slippery," she said. "I was glad, for a moment, of Mr. Hamel's strong hand. Where are those dear puppies? Chow-Chow," she went on, "come and sit by your mistress at once."

Hamel's fingers, inside his waistcoat pocket, were smoothing out the crumpled-up piece of paper which she had passed to him. Soon he had it quite flat. Mrs. Seymour, as though freed from some anxiety, chattered away gayly.

"I don't know that I shall apologize to Mr. Hamel at all for the young peo-

ple being away," she declared. "Just fancy what we have saved him from—a solitary meal served by Hannah Cox! Do you know that they say she is half-witted, Mr. Hamel?"

"So far, she has looked after me very well," Hamel observed.

"Her intellect is defective," Mr. Fentolin remarked, "on one point only. The good woman is obsessed by the idea that her husband and sons are still calling to her from the Dagger Rocks. It is almost pitiful to meet her wandering about there on a stormy night. The seacoasts are full of these little village tragedies—real tragedies, too, however insignificant they may seem to us."

Mr. Fentolin's tone was gently sympathetic. He changed the subject a moment or two later, however.

"Nero fiddles to-night," he said, "while Rome burns. There are hundreds in our position, yet it certainly seems queer that we should be sitting here so quietly when the whole country is in such a state of excitement. I see the press this morning is preaching an immediate declaration of war."

"Against whom?" Mrs. Seymour asked.

Mr. Fentolin smiled.

"That does seem to be rather the trouble," he admitted. "Russia, Austria, Germany, Italy, and France are all assisting at a conference to which no English representative has been bidden. In a sense, of course, that is equivalent to an act of hostility from all these countries toward England. The question is whether we have or have not a secret understanding with France, and if so, how far she will be bound by it. There is a rumor that when Monsieur Deschelles was asked formally whom he represented, he replied: 'France and Great Britain.' There may be something in it. It is hard to see how any English statesman could have left unguarded the Mediterranean, with

all that it means, trusting simply to the faith of a country with whom we have no binding agreement. On the other hand, there is the mobilization of the fleet. If France is really faithful, one wonders if there was need for such an extreme step."

"I am out of touch with political affairs," Hamel declared. "I have been away from England for so long."

"I, on the other hand," Mr. Fentolin continued, his eyes glittering a little, "have made the study of the political situation in Europe my hobby for years. I have sent to me the leading newspapers of Berlin, Rome, Paris, St. Petersburg, and Vienna. For two hours every day I read them, side by side. It is curious sometimes to note the common understanding which seems to exist between the powers not bound by any formal alliance. For years war seemed a very unlikely thing, and now," he added, leaning forward in his chair, "I pronounce it almost a certainty."

Hamel looked at his host a little curiously. Mr. Fentolin's gentleness of expression seemed to have departed. His face was hard, his eyes agleam. He had almost the look of a bird of prey. For some reason, the thought of war seemed to be a joy to him. Perhaps he read something of Hamel's wonder in his expression, for with a shrug of the shoulders he dismissed the subject.

"Well," he concluded, "all these things lie on the knees of the gods. I dare say you wonder, Mr. Hamel, why a poor, useless creature like myself should take the slightest interest in passing events? It is just the fascination of the looker-on. I want your opinion about that champagne. Florence, dear, you must join us. We will drink to Mr. Hamel's health. We will perhaps couple that toast in our minds with the sentiment which I am sure is not very far from your thoughts, Florence."

Hamel raised his glass, and bowed to his host and hostess. He was not wholly at his ease. It seemed to him that he was being watched with a queer persistence by both of them. Mrs. Seymour continued to talk and laugh with a gayety which was too obviously forced. Mr. Fentolin posed for a while as the benevolent listener. He mildly applauded his sister-in-law's stories, and encouraged Hamel in the recital of some of his reminiscences. Suddenly the door was opened. Miss Price appeared. She walked smoothly across the room, and stood by Mr. Fentolin's side. Stooping down, she whispered in his ear. He pushed his chair back a little from the table. His face was dark with anger.

"I said not before ten to-night," he muttered.

Again she spoke in his ear, so softly that the sound of her voice itself scarcely traveled even as far as where Hamel was sitting. Mr. Fentolin looked steadfastly, for a moment, at his sister-in-law, and from her to Hamel. Then he backed his chair away from the table.

"I shall have to ask to be excused for three minutes," he said. "I must speak over the telephone. It is a call from some one who declares that he has important news."

He turned the steering wheel of his chair, and, with Miss Price by his side, passed across the dining room, out of the oasis of rose-shaded lights, into the shadows, and through the open door. From there he turned his head before he disappeared, as though to watch his guest. Mrs. Seymour was busy fondling one of her dogs, which she had raised to her lap, and Hamel was watching her with a tolerant smile.

"Koto, you little idiot, why can't you sit up like your sister? Was its tail in the way, then! Mr. Hamel," she whispered under her breath, so softly that he barely caught the words, although he was only a few feet away, "don't look



at me. I feel as though we were being watched all the time. You can destroy that piece of paper in your pocket. All that it says is—'Leave here immediately after dinner.'"

Hamel sipped his wine in a nonchalant fashion. His fingers had strayed over the silky coat of the little dog which she had held out as though for his inspection.

"How can I?" he asked. "What excuse can I make?"

"Invent one," she insisted swiftly. "Leave here before ten o'clock. Don't let anything keep you. And destroy that piece of paper in your pocket, if you can—now."

"But, Mrs. Seymour——" he began.

She caught up one of her absurd little pets, and held it to her mouth.

"Meekins is in the doorway," she whispered. "Don't argue with me, please. You are in danger you know nothing about. Pass me the cigarettes."

She leaned back in her chair, smoking quickly. She held one of the dogs on her knee, and talked nonsense to it. Hamel watched her, leaning back in his carved-oak chair, and he found it hard to keep the pity from his eyes. The woman was playing a part, playing it with desperate and pitiful earnestness, a part which seemed the more tragical because of the soft splendor of their surroundings. From the shadowy walls, huge, dimly seen pictures hung about them, a strange and yet impressive background. Their small round dining table, with its rare cut glass, its perfect appointments, its bowls of pink roses, was like a spot of wonderful color in the great room. Two men-servants stood at the sideboard a few yards away, a triumph of negativeness. The butler, who had been absent for a moment, stood now silently waiting behind his master's place.

Hamel was oppressed, during those few minutes of waiting, by a curious sense of unreality, as though he were

taking part in some strange tableau. There was something unreal about his surroundings and his own presence there; something unreal in the atmosphere, charged as it seemed to be with some omen of impending happenings; something unreal in that whispered warning, those few hoarsely uttered words which had stolen to his hearing across the clusters of drooping roses; the absurd babble of the woman, who sat there with tragic things under the powder with which her face was daubed.

"Koto must learn to sit upon his tail—like that. No, not another grape till he sits up. There, then!"

She was leaning forward with a grape between her teeth, toward the tiny animal who was trying in vain to balance his absurdly shaped little body upon the tablecloth. Hamel, without looking around, knew quite well what was happening. Soon he heard the click of the chair. Mr. Fentolin was back in his place. His skin seemed paler and more parchmentlike than ever. His eyes glittered.

"It seems," he announced quietly, as he raised his wineglass to his lips with the air of one needing support, "that we entertained an angel unawares here. This Mr. Dunster is lost for the second time. A very important personage he turns out to be."

"You mean the American whom Gerald brought home after the accident?" Mrs. Seymour asked carelessly.

"Yes," Mr. Fentolin replied. "He insisted upon continuing his journey before he was strong enough. I warned him of what might happen. He has evidently been taken ill somewhere. It seems that he was on his way to the Hague."

"Do you mean that he has disappeared altogether this time?" Hamel asked.

Mr. Fentolin shook his head.

"No, he has found his way to the

Hague safely enough. He is lying there at a hotel in the city, but he is unconscious. There is some talk about his having been robbed on the way. At any rate, they are tracing his movements backward. We are to be honored with a visit from one of Scotland Yard's detectives, to reconstruct his journey from here. Our quiet little corner of the world is becoming quite notorious. Florence, dear, you are tired. I can see it in your eyes. Your headache continues, I am sure. We will not be selfish. Mr. Hamel and I are going to have a long evening in the library. Let me recommend a phenacetin and bed."

She rose at once to her feet, with a dog ruse about either arm.

"I'll take the phenacetin," she promised, "but I hate going to bed early. Shall I see you again, I wonder, Mr. Hamel?"

"Not this evening, I fear," he answered. "I am going to ask Mr. Fentolin to excuse me early."

She passed out of the room. Hamel escorted her as far as the door and then returned. Mr. Fentolin was sitting quite still in his chair. His eyes were fixed upon the tablecloth. He looked up quickly as Hamel resumed his seat.

"You are not in earnest, I hope, Mr. Hamel," he said, "when you tell me that you must leave early? I have been anticipating a long evening. My library is filled with books on South America, which I want to discuss with you."

"Another evening, if you don't mind," Hamel begged. "To-night I must ask you to excuse my hurrying away."

Mr. Fentolin looked up from underneath his eyelids. His glance was quick and penetrating.

"Why this haste?"

Hamel shrugged his shoulders.

"To tell you the truth," he admitted, "I had an idea while I was reading an

article on cantilever bridges this morning. I want to work it out."

Mr. Fentolin glanced behind him. The door of the dining room was closed. The servants had disappeared. Meekins alone, looking more like a prize fighter than ever in his somber evening clothes, had taken the place of the butler behind his master's chair.

"We shall see," Mr. Fentolin said quietly.

### CHAPTER XXX.

Mr. Fentolin pointed to the little pile of books upon the table, the deep easy-chair, the green-shaded lamps, the decanter of wine. He had insisted upon a visit, however brief, to the library.

"It is a student's appeal which I make to you, Mr. Hamel," he said, with a whimsical smile. "Here we are in my study, with the door closed, secure against interruption, a bright fire in the grate, a howling and ever-increasing wind outside. Let us go together over the ground of your last wonderful expedition over the Andes. You will find that I am not altogether ignorant of your profession, or of those very interesting geological problems which you spoke of in connection with that marvelous railway scheme. We will discuss them side by side as sybarites, hang ourselves around with cigarette smoke, drink wine, and presently coffee. It is necessary, is it not, for many reasons, that we become better acquainted? You realize that, I am sure, and you will not persist in returning to your selfish solitude."

Hamel's eyes were fixed a little longingly upon some of the volumes with which the table was covered.

"You must not think me ungrateful or churlish, Mr. Fentolin," he begged. "I have a habit of keeping promises which I make to myself, and to-night I have made myself a promise that I will be back at the Tower by ten o'clock."

"You are obdurate?" Mr. Fentolin asked softly.

"I am afraid I am."

Mr. Fentolin busied himself with the handle of his chair.

"Tell me," he insisted, "is there any other person save yourself to whom you have given this mysterious promise?"

"No one," Hamel replied promptly.

"I am a very sensitive person to atmosphere," Mr. Fentolin continued slowly. "Since the unfortunate visit of this man Dunster, I seem to have been conscious of a certain suspicion, a little cloud of suspicion under which I seem to have lived and moved, even among the members of my own household. My sister-in-law is nervous and hysterical; Gerald has been sullen and disobedient; Esther has avoided me. And now—well, I find even your attitude a little difficult to understand. What does it mean, Mr. Hamel?"

Hamel shook his head.

"I am not in the confidence of the different members of your family," he answered. "So far as I, personally, am concerned——"

"It pleases me sometimes," Mr. Fentolin interrupted, "to interfere to some extent in the affairs of the outside world. If I do so, that is my business. I do it for my own amusement. It is at no time a serious position which I take up. Have I, by any chance, Mr. Hamel, become an object of suspicion to you?"

"There are matters in which you are concerned," Hamel admitted, "which I do not understand, but I see no purpose in discussing them."

Mr. Fentolin wheeled his chair round in a semicircle. He was now between the door and Hamel.

"Weaker mortals than I, Mr. Hamel," he said calmly, "have wielded before now the powers of life and death. From my chair I can make the lightning bite. Science has done away with the triumph of muscularity. Even as we are here

together at this moment, Mr. Hamel, if we should disagree, it is I who am the preordained victor."

Hamel saw the glitter in his hand. This was an end, then, of all doubt! He remained silent.

"Suspensions which are, in a sense, absurd," Mr. Fentolin continued, "have grown until I find them obtrusive and obnoxious. What have I to do with Mr. John P. Dunster? I sent him out from my house. If he is lost or ill, the affair is not mine. Yet one by one those around me are falling away. I told you an hour ago that Gerald was at Brancaster. It is a lie. He has left this house, but no soul in it knows his destination."

Hamel started.

"You mean that he has run away?"

Mr. Fentolin nodded.

"All that I can surmise is that he has followed Dunster," he proceeded. "He has an idea that in some way I robbed or injured the man. He has broken the bond of relationship between us. He has broken his solemn vow. He has run a grave and terrible risk."

"What of Miss Esther?" Hamel asked quickly.

"I have sent her away," Mr. Fentolin replied, "until we come to a clear understanding, you and I. You seem to be a harmless enough person, Mr. Hamel, but appearances are sometimes deceptive. It has been suggested to me that you are a spy."

"By whom?" Hamel demanded.

"By those in whom I trust," Mr. Fentolin told him sternly. "You are a friend of Reginald Kinsley. You met him in Norwich the other day—secretly. Kinsley's chief is a member of the government. He is one of those who will find eternal obloquy if the Hague conference comes to a successful termination. For some strange reason, I am supposed to have robbed or harmed the one man in the world whose message might bring to nought that conference.



Are you here to watch me, Mr. Hamel? Are you one of those who believe that I am either in the pay of a foreign country, or that my harmless efforts to interest myself in great things are efforts inimical to this country; that I am, in short, a traitor?"

"You must admit that many of your actions are incomprehensible," Hamel replied slowly. "There are things here which I do not understand—which certainly require explanation."

"Still, why do you make them your business?" Mr. Fentolin persisted. "If, indeed, the course which I steer is a harmless one," he continued, with a strange, new glitter in his eyes, "then you are an impertinent stranger to whom my doors cannot any longer be open. If you have taken advantage of my hospitality to spy upon me and my actions, if indeed you have a mission here, then you can carry it with you down into hell!"

"I understand that you are threatening me?" Hamel murmured.

Mr. Fentolin smiled.

"Scarcely that, my young friend. I am not quite the obvious sort of villain who flourishes revolvers and lures his victims into secret chambers. These words to you are simply words of warning. I am not like other men, neither am I used to being crossed. When I am crossed, I am dangerous. Leave here, if you will, in safety, and mind your own affairs; but if you show one particle of curiosity as to mine, if you interfere in matters which concern me and me only, remember that you are encircled by powers which are entirely ruthless, absolutely omnipotent. You can walk back to the Tower to-night, and remember that there isn't a step you take which might not be your last if I willed it, and never a soul the wiser. There's a very hungry little mother here who takes her victims and holds them tight. You can hear her calling to you now. Listen!"

He held up his finger. The tide had turned, and through the half-open window came the low thunder of the waves.

"You decline to share my evening," Mr. Fentolin concluded. "Let it be so. Go your own way, Hamel, only take care that your way does not cross mine."

He backed his chair slowly, and pressed the bell. Hamel felt himself dismissed. He passed out into the hall. The door of the drawing-room stood open, and he heard the sound of Mrs. Seymour's thin voice singing some little French song. He hesitated, and then stepped in. With one hand, she beckoned him to her, continuing to play all the time. He stepped over to her side.

"I come to make my adieus," he whispered, with a glance toward the door.

"You are leaving, then?" she asked quickly.

He nodded.

"Mr. Fentolin is in a strange humor," she went on, a moment later, after she had struck the final chords of her song. "There are things going on around us which no one can understand. I think that one of his schemes has miscarried, he has gone too far. He suspects you—I cannot tell you why or how. If only you would go away!"

"What about Esther?" he asked quietly.

"You must leave her," she cried, with a little catch in her throat. "Gerald has broken away. Esther and I must carry still the burden."

She motioned him to go. He touched her fingers for a moment.

"Mrs. Seymour," he said, "I have been a good many years making up my mind. Now that I have done so, I do not think that any one will keep Esther from me."

She looked at him a little pitifully, a little wistfully.

Then, with a shrug of the shoulders, she turned round to the piano and re-

commenced to play. Hamel took his coat and hat from a servant who was waiting in the hall, and passed out into the night.

He walked briskly until he reached the Tower. The wind had risen, but there was still enough light to help him on his way. The little building was in complete darkness. He opened the door and stepped into the sitting room, lit the lamp, and, holding it over his head, went down the passage, and into the kitchen. Then he gave a start. The lamp nearly slipped from his fingers. Kneeling on the stone floor, in very much the same attitude as he had found her earlier in the day, Hannah Cox was crouching patiently by the door which led into the boathouse, her face expressionless, her ear turned toward the crack. She was still listening.

#### CHAPTER XXXI.

Hamel set down the lamp upon the table. He glanced at the little clock upon the dresser—it was a quarter past ten. The woman had observed his entrance, although it seemed in no way to have discomposed her.

"Do you know the time, Mrs. Cox?" he asked. "You ought to have been home hours ago. What are you doing there?"

She rose to her feet. Her expression was one of dogged but patient humility.

"I started for home before nine o'clock, sir," she told him, "but it was worse than ever to-night. All the way along by the sea I seemed to hear their voices, so I came back. I came back to listen. I have been listening for an hour."

Hamel looked at her with a frown upon his forehead.

"Mrs. Cox," he said, "I wish I could understand what it is that you have in your mind. Those are not real voices that you hear—you cannot believe that?"

"Not real voices," she repeated, without the slightest expression in her tone.

"Of course not! And tell me what connection you find between these fancies of yours and that room? Why do you come and listen here?"

"I do not know," she answered patiently.

"You must have some reason," he persisted.

"I have no reason," she assured him, "only some day I shall see behind these doors. Afterward, I shall hear the voices no more."

She was busy tying a shawl around her head. Hamel watched her, still puzzled. He could not get rid of the idea that there was some method behind her madness.

"Tell me—I have found you listening here before. Have you ever heard anything suspicious?"

"I have heard nothing yet," she admitted, "nothing that counts."

"Come," he continued, "couldn't we clear this matter up sensibly? Do you believe that there is anybody in there? Do you believe the place is being used in any way for a wrong purpose? If so, we will insist upon having the keys from Mr. Fentolin. He cannot refuse. The place is mine."

"Mr. Fentolin would not give you the keys, sir," she replied. "If he did—it would be useless."

"Would you like me to break the door in?" Hamel asked.

"You could not do it, sir," she told him, "not you nor anybody else. The door is thicker than my fist, of solid oak. It was a mechanic from New York who fitted the locks. I have heard it said in the village—Bill Hamas, the carpenter, declares that there are double doors. The workmen who were employed here were housed in a tent upon the beach and sent home the day they finished their job. They were never allowed in the village. They were foreigners, most of them. They came

from nobody knows where, and when they had finished, they disappeared. Why was that, sir? What is there inside which Mr. Fentolin needs to guard so carefully?"

"Mr. Fentolin has invented something," Hamel explained. "He keeps the model in there. Inventors are very jealous of their work."

She looked down upon the floor for a moment.

"I shall be here at seven o'clock in the morning, sir. I will give you your breakfast at the usual time."

Hamel opened the door for her.

"Good night, Mrs. Cox," he said. "Would you like me to walk a little way with you? It's a lonely path to the village, and the dikes are full."

"Thanking you, no, sir," she replied. "It's a lonely way, right enough, but it isn't loneliness that frightens me. I am less afraid out with the winds and the darkness than under this roof. If I lose my way and wander all night upon the marsh, I'll be safer out there than you, sir."

She passed away, and Hamel watched her disappear into the darkness. Then he dragged out a bowl of tobacco and filled a pipe. Although he was half ashamed of himself, he strolled back once more into the kitchen, and, drawing up a stool, he sat down just where he had discovered Hannah Cox, sat still and listened. No sound of any sort reached him. He sat there for ten minutes. Then he scrambled to his feet.

"She is mad, of course!" he muttered.

He poured out some whisky, relit his pipe, which had gone out, and drew up a chair to the fire in the sitting room. The wind had increased in violence, and the panes of his window rattled continually. He yawned, and tried to fancy that he was sleepy. It was useless. He was compelled to admit the truth. His nerves were all on edge. In a sense he was afraid. The thought of bed repelled him. He had not a single im-

pulse toward repose. Outside, the wind was all the time gathering force. More than once his window was splashed with the spray carried on by the wind which followed the tide.

He sat quite still and tried to think calmly, tried to piece together in his mind the sequence of events which had brought him to this part of the world and which had led to his remaining where he was, an undesired hanger-on at the threshold of Miles Fentolin. He had the feeling that to-night he had burned his boats. There was no longer any pretense of friendliness possible between him and this strange creature. Mr. Fentolin suspected him, realized that he himself was suspected. But of what?

Hamel moved in his chair restlessly. Sometimes that gathering cloud of suspicion seemed to him grotesque. Of what real harm could he be capable, this little autocrat, who from his chair seemed to exercise such a malign influence upon every one with whom he was brought into contact? Hamel sighed. The riddle was insoluble. With a sudden rush of warmer and more joyous feelings, he let the subject slip away from him. He closed his eyes and dreamed for a while. There was a new world before him, joys which only so short a time ago he had fancied had passed him by.

He sat up in his chair with a start. The fire had become merely a handful of gray ashes, his limbs were numb and stiff. The lamp was flickering out. He had been dozing, how long he had no idea. Something had awakened him abruptly. There was a cold draft blowing through the room.

He turned his head, his hands still gripping the sides of his chair. His heart gave a leap. The outer door was a few inches open, was being held open by some invisible force. There was some one there, some one on the point of entering stealthily. Even as he watched,



the crack became a little wider. He sat with his eyes riveted upon that opening space. The unseen hand was still at work. Every instant he expected to see a face thrust forward. The sensation of absolute physical fear by which he was oppressed was a revelation to him. He found himself wishing almost feverishly that he had armed himself. The physical strength in which he had trusted seemed to him at that instant a valueless and impotent thing.

There was a splash of spray or rain-drops against the window and through the crack in the door. The lamp chimney hissed and spluttered, and finally went out. The room was in sudden darkness. Hamel sprang then to his feet. Silence had become an intolerable thing. He felt the close presence of another human being creeping in upon him.

"Who's there?" he cried. "Who's there, I say?"

There was no direct answer, only the door was pushed a little farther open. He had stepped close to it now. The sweep of the wind was upon his face, although in the black darkness he could see nothing. And then a sudden recollection flashed in upon him. From his trousers pocket he snatched a little electric torch. In an instant his thumb had pressed the button. He turned it upon the door. The shivering white hand which held it open was plainly in view. It was the hand of a woman! He stepped swiftly forward. A dark figure almost fell into his arms.

"Mrs. Seymour!" he exclaimed, aghast.

An hysterical cry, choked and subdued, broke from her lips. He half carried, half led her to his chair. Suddenly steadied by the presence of this unlooked-for emergency, he closed the outside door and relit the lamp with firm fingers. Then he turned to face her, and his amazement at this strange visit became consternation.

She was still in her dinner gown of black satin, but it was soaked through with the rain, and hung about her like a black shroud. She had lost one shoe, there was a great hole in her silk stocking. Her hair was all disarranged; one of its numerous switches was hanging down over her ear. The rouge upon her cheeks had run down on to her neck. She sat there, looking at him out of her hollow eyes, like some trapped animal. She was shaking with fear. It was fear, not faintness, which kept her silent.

"Tell me, please, what is the matter?" he insisted, speaking as indifferently as he could. "Tell me at once what has happened?"

She pointed to the door.

"Lock it!" she implored.

He turned down the latch, and drew the bolt. The sound seemed to give her a little courage. Her fingers went to her throat for a moment.

"Give me some water."

He poured out some soda water. She drank only a sip, and put it down again. He began to be alarmed. She had the appearance of one who has suddenly lost her senses.

"Please tell me just what has happened?" he begged. "If I can help in any way, you know I will. But you must tell me. Do you realize that it is three o'clock? I should have been in bed only I went to sleep over the fire here."

"I know," she answered. "It is just the wind that has taken away my breath. It was a hard struggle to get here. Listen—you are our friend, Mr. Hamel—Esther's and mine? Swear that you are our friend?"

"Upon my honor, I am," he assured her. "You should know that."

"For eight years," she went on, her voice clear enough now, although it seemed charged with a curious metallic vibration, "for eight years we've borne it, all three of us, slaves, bound hand

and foot, lashed with his tongue, driven along the path of his desires. We have seen evil things. We have been on the point of rebellion, and he's come a little nearer and he's pointed back. He has taken me by the hand, and I have walked by the side of his chair, loathing it, loathing myself, out on to the terrace and down below; just where it happened. You know what happened there, Mr. Hamel?"

"You mean where Mr. Fentolin met with his accident."

"It was no accident!" she cried, glancing for a moment around her. "It was no accident! It was my husband who took him up and threw him over the terrace, down below; my husband who tried to kill him; Esther's father—Gerald's father! Miles was in the foreign office then, and he did something disgraceful. He sold a secret to Austria. He was always a great gambler, and he was in debt. Seymour found out about it. He followed him down here. They met upon the terrace. I—I saw it!"

He was silent for a moment.

"No one has known the truth," he murmured.

"No one has ever known," she assented, "and our broken lives have been the price. It was Miles himself who made the bargain. We—we can't go on, Mr. Hamel."

"I begin to understand," Hamel said softly. "You suffer everything from Miles Fentolin because he kept the secret. Very well, that belongs to the past. Something has happened, something to-night, which has brought you here. Tell me about it?"

Once more her voice began to shake.

"We've seen—terrible things—horrible things," she faltered. "We've held our peace. Perhaps it's been nearly as bad before, but we've closed our eyes—we haven't wanted to know. Now—we can't help it. Mr. Hamel, Esther isn't at Lord Saxthorpe's. She never went

there. They didn't ask her. And Dunster—the man Dunster——"

"Where is Esther?" Hamel interrupted suddenly.

"Locked up away from you, locked up because she rebelled!"

"And Dunster?"

She shook her head. Her eyes were filled with horror.

"I don't know!" she cried. "I don't know!"

"But he left the Hall—I saw him!"

She shook her head.

"It wasn't Dunster. It was the man Miles makes use of—Ryan, the librarian. He was once an actor."

"Where is Dunster, then?" Hamel asked quickly. "What has become of him?"

She opened her lips and closed them again, struggled to speak and failed. She sat there, breathing quickly, but silent. The power of speech had gone.

## CHAPTER XXXII.

Hamel, for the next few minutes, forgot everything else in his efforts to restore to consciousness his unexpected visitor. He rebuilt the fire, heated some water upon his spirit lamp, and forced some hot drink between the lips of the woman who was now almost in a state of collapse. Then he wrapped her round in his own ulster, and drew her closer to the fire. He tried during those few moments to put away the memory of all that she had told him. Gradually she began to recover. She opened her eyes, and drew a little sigh. She made no effort at speech, however. She simply lay and looked at him like some wounded animal. He came over to her side and chafed one of her cold hands.

"Come," he said at last, "you begin to look more like yourself now. You are quite safe in here, and, for Esther's sake as well as your own, you know that I am your friend."

She nodded, and her fingers gently pressed his.

"I am sure of it," she murmured.

"Now let us see where we are," he continued. "Tell me exactly why you risked so much by leaving St. David's Hall to-night and coming down here. Isn't there any chance that he might find out?"

"I don't know," she answered. "It was Lucy Price who sent me. She came to my room just as I was undressing."

"Lucy Price," he repeated. "The secretary?"

"Yes! She told me that she had meant to come to you herself. She sent me instead. She thought it best. This man Dunster is being kept alive because there is something Miles wants him to tell him, and he won't. But to-night, if he is still alive, if he won't tell they mean to make away with him. They are afraid."

"Miss Price told you this?" Hamel asked gravely.

Mrs. Seymour nodded.

"Yes! She said so. She knows—she knows everything. She has been like the rest of us. She, too, has suffered. She, too, has reached the breaking point. She loved him before—the accident. She has been his slave ever since. Listen!"

She suddenly clutched his arm. They were both silent. There was nothing to be heard but the wind. She leaned a little closer to him.

"Lucy Price sent me here to-night because she was afraid that it was to-night they meant to take him from his hiding place and kill him. The police have left off searching for Mr. Dunster in Yarmouth and the Hague. There is a detective in the neighborhood and another one on his way here. They are afraid to keep him alive any longer."

"Where was Mr. Fentolin when you left?" Hamel asked.

"I asked Lucy Price that," she re-

plied. "When she came to my room there were no signs of his leaving. She told me to come and tell you everything. Do you know where Mr. Dunster is?"

Hamel shook his head.

"Within a few yards of here," she went on. "He is in the boathouse, the place where he told you that he kept a model of his invention. They brought him here the night before they put his clothes on Ryan, and sent him off disguised as Mr. Dunster, in the car, to Yarmouth."

Hamel started up, but she clutched at his arm, and pulled him back.

"No," she cried, "you can't break in! There are double doors, and a wonderful lock. The boathouse is yours; the building is yours. In the morning you must demand the keys—if he does not come to-night!"

"And how are we to know," Hamel asked, "if he comes to-night?"

"Go outside," she whispered. "Look toward St. David's Hall and tell me how many lights you can see."

He drew back the bolt, unlatched the door, and stepped out into the darkness. The wind and the driving rain beat against his face. A cloud of spray enveloped and soaked him. Like lamps hung in the sky, the lights of St. David's Hall shone out through the black gulf. He counted them carefully; then he stepped back.

"They are seven," he told her, closing the door with an effort.

She counted upon her fingers.

"I must come and see," she muttered. "I must be sure. Help me."

He lifted her to her feet, and they staggered out together.

"Look!" she went on, gripping his arm. "You see that row of lights? If anything happens, if Mr. Fentolin leaves the Hall to-night to come down here, a light will appear on the left in the far corner. We must watch for that light. We must watch——"



The words, whispered hoarsely into his ear, suddenly died away. Even as they stood there, right away from the other lights another one shone suddenly out in the spot toward which she had pointed, and continued to burn steadily. He felt the woman who was clinging to his arm become suddenly a dead weight.

"She was right!" Mrs. Seymour moaned. "He is coming down to-night! He is preparing to leave now—perhaps he has already started! What shall we do? What shall we do?"

Hamel was conscious of a gathering sense of excitement. He, too, looked at the signal which was flashing out its message toward them. Then he gripped his companion's arm, and almost carried her back into the sitting room.

"Look here," he said firmly, "you can do nothing further. You have done your part, and done it well. Stay where you are and wait. The rest belongs to me."

"But what can you do?" she demanded, her voice shaking with fear. "Meekins will come with him, and Doctor Sarson unless he is there already. What can you do against them? Meekins can break any ordinary man's back, and Mr. Fentolin will have a revolver."

Hamel threw another log onto the fire, and drew her chair closer to it.

"Never mind about me," he declared cheerfully. "Mr. Fentolin is too clever to attempt violence, except as a last resource. He knows that I have friends in London who would need some explanation of my disappearance. Stay here and wait."

She recognized the note of authority in his tone, and she bowed her head. Then she looked up at him—she was a changed woman.

"Perhaps I have done ill to drag you into our troubles, Mr. Hamel," she said, "and yet I believe in you—I believe that you really care for Esther. If you can help us now, it will be for your

happiness, too. You are a man. God bless you!"

Hamel groped his way round the side of the Tower and took up a position at the extreme corner of the landward side of the building, within a yard of the closed doors. The light far out upon the left was still gleaming brightly, but two of the others in a line with it had disappeared. He flattened himself against the wall and waited, listening intently, his eyes straining through the darkness. Yet they were almost upon him before he had the slightest indication of their presence. A single gleam of light in the path, come and gone like a flash, the gleam of an electric torch directed momentarily toward the road, was his first indication that they were near. A moment or two later he heard the strange click, click of the little engine attached to Mr. Fentolin's chair.

Hamel set his teeth, and stepped a few inches farther back. The darkness was so intense that they were actually within a yard or so of him before he could even dimly discern their shapes. There were three of them—Mr. Fentolin in his chair, Doctor Sarson, and Meekins. They paused for a moment, while the latter produced a key. Hamel distinctly heard a slow, soft whisper from Doctor Sarson:

"Shall I go round to the front, and see that he is in bed?"

"No need," Mr. Fentolin replied calmly. "It is nearly four o'clock. Better not risk the sound of your footsteps upon the pebbles. Now!"

The door swung noiselessly open. The darkness was so complete that even though Hamel could have touched them with an outstretched hand, their shapes were invisible. Hamel, who had formed no definite plans, had no time to hesitate. As the last one disappeared through the door, he, too, slipped in. He turned abruptly to the left, and, holding his breath, stood against the

wall. The door closed behind them. The gleam of the electric light flashed across the stone floor and rested for a moment upon a trapdoor which Meekins had already stooped to lift. It fell back noiselessly upon rubber studs, and Meekins immediately slipped through it a ladder, on either side of which was a grooved stretch of board, evidently fashioned to allow Mr. Fentolin's carriage to pass down.

Hamel held his breath. The moment for him was critical. If the light flashed once in his direction, he must be discovered. Both Meekins and Doctor Sarson, however, were intent upon the task of steering Mr. Fentolin's little carriage down below. They placed the wheels in the two grooves, Meekins secured the carriage with a rope which he let run through his fingers. As soon as the little vehicle had apparently reached the bottom, he turned, thrust the electric torch in his pocket, and stepped lightly down the ladder. Doctor Sarson followed his example. They disappeared in perfect silence, and left the door open.

Presently a gleam of light came traveling up, from which Hamel knew that they had lit a lamp below. Very softly he crept across the floor, threw himself upon his stomach, and peered down. Below him was a room, or rather a cellar, parts of which seemed to have been cut out of the solid rock. Immediately underneath was a plain iron bedstead, on which was lying stretched the figure of a man.

In those first few moments Hamel failed altogether to recognize Mr. Dunster. He was thin and white, he seemed to have shrunk; his face, with its coarse growth of beard, seemed like the face of an old man. Yet the eyes were open, eyes dull and heavy as though with pain. So far no word had been spoken, but at that moment Mr. Fentolin broke the silence.

"My dear guest," he said, "I bring

you our most sincere apologies. It has gone very much against the grain, I can assure you, to have neglected you for so long a time. It is entirely the fault of the very troublesome young man who occupies the other portion of this building. In the daytime his presence makes it exceedingly difficult for us to offer you those little attentions which you might naturally expect."

The man upon the bed neither moved nor changed his position in any way. Nor did he speak. All power of initiative seemed to have deserted him. He lay quite still, his eyes fixed upon Mr. Fentolin.

"There comes a time," the latter continued, "when every one of us is confronted with what might be described as the crisis of our lives. Yours has come, my guest, at precisely this moment. It is, if my watch tells me the truth, five and twenty minutes to four. It is the last day of April. The year you know. You have exactly one minute to decide whether you will live a short time longer, or whether you will, on this last day of April, and before—say, a quarter to four, make that little journey the nature of which you and I have discussed more than once."

Still the man upon the bed made no movement nor any reply. Mr. Fentolin sighed, and beckoned to Doctor Sarson.

"I am afraid," he whispered, "that that wonderful drug of yours, doctor, has been even a little too far-reaching in its results. It has kept our friend so quiet that he has lost even the power of speech, perhaps even the desire to speak. A little restorative, I think—just a few drops."

Doctor Sarson nodded silently. He drew from his pocket a little vial and poured into a wineglass, which stood on a table by the side of the bed, half a dozen drops of some ruby-colored liquid, to which he added a tablespoonful of water. Then he leaned once more over the bed, and poured the con-



tents of the glass between the lips of the semiconscious man.

"Give him two minutes," he said calmly. "He will be able to speak then."

Mr. Fentolin nodded, and leaned back in his chair. He glanced around the room a little critically. There was a thick carpet upon the floor, a sofa piled with cushions in one corner, and several other articles of furniture. The walls, however, were uncovered and were stained with damp. A great pink fungus stood out within a few inches of the bed, a grim mixture of exquisite coloring and loathsome imperfections. The atmosphere was fetid. Meekins suddenly struck a match and lit some grains of powder in a saucer. A curious odor of incense stole through the place. Mr. Fentolin nodded appreciatively.

"That is better," he declared. "Really, the atmosphere here is positively unpleasant. I am ashamed to think that our guest has had to put up with it so long. And yet," he went on, "I think we must call it his own fault. I trust that he will no longer be obstinate."

The effect of the restorative began to show itself. The man on the bed moved restlessly. His eyes were no longer altogether expressionless. He was staring at Mr. Fentolin as one looks at some horrible vision. Mr. Fentolin smiled pleasantly.

"Now you are looking more like your old self, my dear Mr. Dunster," he remarked. "I don't think that I need repeat what I said when I first came, need I? You have just to utter that one word, and your little visit to us will be at an end."

The man looked around at all of them. He raised himself a little on his elbow. For the first time, Hamel, crouching above, recognized any likeness to Mr. John P. Dunster.

"I'll see you in hell first!"

Mr. Fentolin's face momentarily

darkened. He moved a little nearer to the man upon the bed.

"Dunster," he said, "I am in grim earnest. Never mind arguments. Never mind why I am on the other side. They are restless about you in America. Unless I can cable that word to-morrow morning, they'll communicate direct with the Hague, and I shall have had my trouble for nothing. It is not my custom to put up with failure. Therefore, let me tell you that no single one of my threats has been exaggerated. My patience has reached its breaking point. Give me that word, or before four o'clock strikes you will find yourself in a new chamber, among the corpses of those misguided fishermen, mariners of ancient days, and a few others. It's only a matter of fifty yards out to the great sea pit below the Dagger Rocks—I've spoken to you about it before, haven't I? So surely as I speak to you of it at this moment——"

Mr. Fentolin's speech came to an abrupt termination. A convulsive movement of Meekins', an expression of blank amazement on the part of Doctor Sarson, had suddenly checked the words upon his lips. He turned his head quickly in the direction toward which they had been gazing, toward which, in fact, at that moment, Meekins, with a low cry, had made a fruitless spring. The ladder down which they had descended was slowly disappearing. Meekins, with a jump, missed the last rung by only a few inches. Some unseen hand was drawing it up. Already the last few feet were vanishing in mid-air. Mr. Fentolin sat quite quiet, and still. He looked through the trapdoor and saw Hamel.

"Most ingenious and, I must confess, most successful, my young friend!" he exclaimed pleasantly. "When you have made the ladder quite secure, perhaps you will be so good as to discuss this little matter with us?"

There was no immediate reply. The



eyes of all four men were turned now upon that empty space through which the ladder had finally disappeared. Mr. Fentolin's fingers disappeared within the pocket of his coat. Something very bright was glistening in his hand when he withdrew it.

"Come and parley with us, Mr. Hamel," he begged. "You will not find us unreasonable."

Hamel's voice came back in reply, but Hamel himself kept well away from the opening.

"The conditions," he said, "are unpropitious. A little time for reflection will do you no harm."

The trapdoors were suddenly closed. Mr. Fentolin's face, as he looked up, became diabolic.

"We are trapped!" he muttered. "Caught like rats in a hole!"

### CHAPTER XXXIII.

A gleam of day was in the sky as Hamel, with Mrs. Seymour by his side, passed along the path which led from the Tower to St. David's Hall. Lights were still burning from its windows; the outline of the building itself was faintly defined against the sky. Behind them, across the sea, was that one straight line of gray merging into silver. The rain had ceased and the wind had dropped. On either side of them stretched the brimming creeks.

"Can we get into the house without waking any one?" he asked.

"Quite easily," she assured him. "The front door is never barred." She walked by his side, swiftly and with surprising vigor. In the still, gray light her face was more ghastly than ever, but there was a new firmness about her mouth, a new decision in her tone. They reached the Hall without further speech, and she led the way to a small door on the eastern side, through which they entered noiselessly and passed along a little passage. A couple of

lights were still burning. The place seemed full of shadows.

"What are you going to do now?" she whispered.

"I want to ring up London on the telephone," he replied. "I know that there is a detective either in the neighborhood or on his way here, but I shall tell my friend that he had better come down himself."

She nodded.

"I am going to release Esther," she said. "She is locked in her room. The telephone is in the study. I will come down there to you."

She passed silently up the broad staircase. Hamel groped his way across the hall into the library. He turned on the small electric reading lamp and drew up a chair to the side of the telephone. Even as he lifted the receiver to his ear, he looked around him half apprehensively. It seemed as though every moment he would hear the click of Mr. Fentolin's chair.

He got the exchange at Norwich without difficulty, and a few minutes later a sleepy reply came from the number he had rung up in London. It was Kinsley's servant who answered.

"I want to speak to Mr. Kinsley at once upon most important business," Hamel announced.

"Very sorry, sir," the man replied. "Mr. Kinsley left town last night for the country."

"Where has he gone?" Hamel demanded quickly. "You can tell me. You know who I am—I am Mr. Hamel."

"Into Norfolk somewhere, sir. He went with several other gentlemen."

"Is that Bullen?" Hamel asked.

The man admitted the fact.

"Can you tell me if any of the people with whom Mr. Kinsley left London were connected with the police?" he inquired.

The man hesitated.

"I believe so, sir," he admitted. "The

gentlemen started in a motor car and were going to drive all night."

Hamel laid down the receiver. At any rate, he would not be left long with this responsibility upon him. He walked out into the hall. The house was still wrapped in deep silence. Then from somewhere above him, coming down the stairs, he heard the rustle of a woman's gown. He looked up. It was Miss Price, fully dressed, who came slowly toward him. She held up her finger and led the way back into the library. She was dressed as neatly as ever, but there was a queer light in her eyes.

"I have seen Mrs. Seymour Fentolin," she said. "She tells me that you have left Mr. Fentolin and the others in the subterranean room of the Tower."

Hamel nodded.

"They have Dunster down there," he told her. "I followed them in—it seemed the best thing to do. I have a friend from London who is on his way down here now with some detective officers to inquire into the matter of Dunster's disappearance."

"Are you going to leave them where they are until these people arrive?" she asked.

"I think so," he replied, after a moment's hesitation. "I don't seem to have had time to consider even what to do. The opportunity came and I embraced it. There they are, and they won't dare to do any further harm to Dunster now. Mrs. Seymour was down in my room, and I thought it best to bring her back first before I even parleyed with them again."

"You must be careful," she advised slowly. "The man Dunster has been drugged; he has lost some of his will—he may have lost some of his mental balance. Mr. Fentolin is clever. He will find a dozen ways to wriggle out of any charge that can be brought

against him. You know what he has really done?"

"I can guess."

"He has kept back a document signed by the twelve men in America who control the whole of Wall Street, who control practically the money markets of the world. That document is a warning to Germany that they will have no war against England. Owing to Mr. Fentolin, it has not been delivered, and the conference is sitting now. War may be declared at any moment."

"But as a matter of common sense," Hamel asked, "why does Mr. Fentolin desire war?"

"You do not understand Mr. Fentolin," she told him quietly. "He is not like other men. There are some who live almost entirely for the sake of making others happy, who find joy in seeing people content and satisfied. Mr. Fentolin is the reverse of this. He has but one craving in life—to see pain in others. To see a human being suffer is to him a debauch of happiness. A war which laid this country waste would fill him with a delight which you could never understand. There are no normal human beings like this. It is a disease in the man, a disease which came upon him after his accident."

"Yet you have all been his slaves," Hamel said curiously.

"We have all been his slaves," she admitted, "for different reasons. Before his accident came, Mr. Fentolin was my master and the only man in the world for me. After his accident, I think my feelings for him, if anything, grew stronger. I sold my conscience, my self-respect, everything in life worth having, to bring a smile to his lips, to help him through a single moment of his misery. And just lately the reaction has come. He has played with me just as he would sit and pull the legs out of a spider to watch its

agony. I have been one of his favorite amusements. And even now, if he came into this room, I think that I should be helpless. I should probably fall at his feet and pray for forgiveness."

Hamel looked at her wonderingly.

"I have come down to warn you," she went on. "It is possible that this is the beginning of the end, that his wonderful fortune will desert him, that his star has gone down. But remember that he has the brains and courage of genius. You think that you have him in a trap. Don't be surprised, when you go back, to find that he has turned the tables upon you."

"Impossible!" Hamel declared. "I looked all round the place. There isn't a window or opening anywhere. The trapdoor is in the middle of the ceiling and it is fifteen feet from the floor. It shuts with a spring."

"It may be as you say," she observed. "It may be that he is safe. Remember, though, if you go near him, that he is desperate."

"Do you know where Miss Fentolin is?" he interrupted.

"She is with her mother," the woman replied impatiently. "She is coming down. Tell me, what are you going to do with Mr. Fentolin? Nothing else matters."

"I have a friend," Hamel answered, "who will see to that."

"If you are relying upon the law," she said, "I do not think you will find that the law can touch him. Mr. Dunster was brought to the house in a perfectly natural manner. He was certainly injured, and injured in a railway accident. Doctor Sarson is a fully qualified surgeon, and he will declare that Mr. Dunster was unfit to travel. If necessary, they will have destroyed the man's intelligence. If you think that you have him broken, let me warn you that you may be disappointed. Let

me, if I may, give you one word of advice."

"Please do," Hamel begged.

She looked at him coldly. Her tone was still free from any sort of emotion.

"You have taken up some sort of position here," she continued, "as a friend of Mrs. Seymour Fentolin, a friend of the family. Don't let them come back under the yoke. You know the secret of their bondage?"

"I know it," he admitted.

"They have been his slaves because their absolute obedience to his will was one of the conditions of his secrecy. He has drawn the cords too tight. Better let the truth be known, if needs be, than have their three lives broken. Don't let them go back under his governance. For me, I cannot tell. If he comes back, as he will come back, I may become his slave again, but let them break away. Listen—that is Mrs. Fentolin."

She left him. Hamel followed her out into the hall. Esther and her mother were already at the foot of the stairs. He drew them into the study. Esther gave him her hands, but she was trembling in every limb.

"I am terrified!" she whispered. "Every moment I think I can hear the click of that awful carriage. He will come back—I am sure he will come back!"

"He may," Hamel answered sturdily, "but never to make you people his slaves again. You have done enough. You have earned your freedom."

"I agree," Mrs. Fentolin said firmly. "We have gone on from sacrifice to sacrifice, until it has become a habit with us to consider him the master of our bodies and our souls. To-day, Esther, we have reaching the breaking point. Not even for the sake of that message from the other side of the grave, not even to preserve his honor and his memory, can we do more."

Hamel held up his finger. He opened



the French windows, and they followed him out onto the terrace. The gray dawn had broken now over the sea. There were gleams of fitful sunshine on the marshes. Some distance away a large motor car was coming rapidly along the road.

#### CHAPTER XXXIV.

Mr. John P. Dunster, lying flat upon his little bed, watched with dilated eyes the disappearance of the ladder. Then he laughed. It was a queer sound—broken, spasmodic, devoid of any of the ordinary elements of humor—and yet it was a laugh. Mr. Fentolin turned his head slowly toward his prisoner and nodded thoughtfully.

"What a constitution, my friend!" he exclaimed, without any trace of disturbance in his voice. "And what a sense of humor! Strange that a trifling circumstance like this should affect it. Meekins, burn some more of the powder. The atmosphere down here may be salubrious, but I am unaccustomed to it."

"Perhaps," Mr. Dunster said in a hollow tone, "you will have some opportunity now of discovering with me what it is like."

"That, too, is just possible," Mr. Fentolin admitted, blowing out a little volume of smoke from a cigarette which he had just lit, "but one never knows. We have friends, and our position, although, I must admit, a little ridiculous, is easily remedied. But how that mischief-making Mr. Hamel could have found his way into the boathouse does, I must confess, perplex me."

"He must have been hanging around and followed us in when we came," Meekins muttered. "Somehow, I fancied I felt some one near."

"Our young friend," Mr. Fentolin continued, "has, without doubt, an obvious turn of mind. He will send for his acquaintance in the foreign office;

they will haul out Mr. Dunster here, and he will have a belated opportunity of delivering his message at the Hague."

"You aren't going to murder me first, then?" Mr. Dunster grunted.

Mr. Fentolin smiled at him benignly.

"My dear and valued guest," he protested, "why so forbidding an idea? Let me assure you from the bottom of my heart that any bodily harm to you is the most unlikely thing in the world. You see, though you might not think it," he went on, "I love life. That is why I keep a doctor always by my side. That is why I insist upon his making a complete study of my constitution and treating me in every respect as though I were, indeed, an invalid. I am really only fifty-nine years old. It is my intention to live until I am eighty-nine. An offense against the law of the nature you indicate might interfere materially with my intentions."

Mr. Dunster struggled for a moment for breath.

"Look here," he said, "that's all right, but do you suppose you won't be punished for what you've done to me? You laid a deliberate plot to bring me to St. David's Hall; you've kept me locked up, dosed me with drugs, brought me down here at the dead of night, kept me a prisoner in a dungeon. Do you think you can do that for nothing? Do you think you won't have to suffer for it?"

Mr. Fentolin smiled.

"My dear Mr. Dunster," he reminded him, "you were in a railway accident, you know—there is no possible doubt about that. And the wound in your head is still there, in a very dangerous place. Men who have been in railway accidents, and who have a gaping wound very close to their brain, are subject to delusions. I have simply done my best to play the good Samaritan. Your clothes and papers are all

untouched. If my eminent physician had pronounced you ready to travel a week ago, you would certainly have been allowed to depart a week ago. Any interference in your movements has been entirely in the interests of your health."

Mr. Dunster tried to sit up, but found himself unable.

"So you think they won't believe my story, eh?" he muttered. "Well, we shall see."

Mr. Fentolin contemplated the burning end of his cigarette for a moment thoughtfully.

"If I believed," he said, "that there was any chance of your statements being accepted, I am afraid I should be compelled, in all our interests, to ask Doctor Sarson to pursue just a step farther that experiment into the anatomy of your brain with which he has already trifled."

Mr. Dunster's face was suddenly ghastly. His reserve of strength seemed to ebb away. The memory of some horrible moment seemed to hold him in its clutches.

"For God's sake, leave me alone!" he moaned. "Let me get away, that's all—let me crawl away!"

"Ah!" Mr. Fentolin murmured. "That sounds much more reasonable. When you talk like that, my friend, I feel, indeed, that there is hope for you. Let us abandon this subject for the present. Have you solved the puzzle yet?" he asked Meekins.

Meekins was standing below the closed trapdoor. He had already dragged up a wooden case underneath, and was piling it with various articles of furniture.

"Not yet, sir," he replied. "When I have made this steadier, I am just going to see what pressure I can bring to bear on the trapdoor."

"I heard the bolts go," Doctor Sarson remarked uneasily.

"In that case," Mr. Fentolin declared,

"it will indeed be an interesting test of our friend Meekins' boasted strength. Meekins holds his place—a very desirable place, too—chiefly for two reasons, first his discretion and secondly his muscles. He has never before had a real opportunity of testing the latter. We shall see."

Doctor Sarson came slowly and gravely to the bedside. He looked down upon his patient. Mr. Dunster shivered.

"I am not sure, sir," he said very softly, "that Mr. Dunster, in his present state of mind, is a very safe person to be allowed his freedom. It is true that we have kept him here for his own sake, because of his fits of mental wandering. Our statements, however, may be doubted. An apparent return to sanity on his part may lend color to his accusations, especially if permanent. Perhaps it would be as well to pursue that investigation a shade farther. A touch more to the left, and I do not think that Mr. Dunster will remember much in this world likely to affect us."

Mr. Dunster's face was like marble. There were beads of perspiration upon his forehead, his eyes were filled with reminiscent horror. Mr. Fentolin bent over him with genuine interest.

"What a picture he would make!" he murmured. "What a drama! Do you know, I am half inclined to agree with you, Sarson. The only trouble is that you have not your instruments here."

"I could improvise something that would do the trick," the doctor said thoughtfully. "It really isn't a complicated affair. It seems to me that his story may gain credence from the very fact of our being discovered in this extraordinary place. To have moved him here was a mistake, sir."

"Perhaps so," Mr. Fentolin admitted with a sigh. "It was our young friend Mr. Hamel who was responsible for it.

I fancied him arriving with a search warrant at any moment. We will bear in mind your suggestion for a few minutes. Let us watch Meekins. This promises to be interesting."

By dint of piling together all the furniture in the place, the man was now able to reach the trapdoor. He pressed upon it vigorously without even bending the wood. Mr. Fentolin smiled pleasantly.

"Meekins," he said, "look at me."

The man turned, and faced his master. His aspect of dogged civility had never been more apparent.

"Now listen," Mr. Fentolin went on. "I want to remind you of certain things, Meekins. We are among friends here—no secrecy, you understand, or anything of that sort. You need not be afraid! You know how you came to me? You remember that little affair of Anna Jayes in Hartlepool?"

The face of the man filled with terror. He began to tremble where he stood. Mr. Fentolin played for a moment with his collar, as though he found it tight.

"Such a chance it was, my dear Meekins," Mr. Fentolin continued cheerfully, "which brought me that little scrap of knowledge concerning you. It has bought me through all these years a good deal of faithful service. I am not ungrateful, believe me. I intend to retain you for my body servant and to keep my lips sealed, for a great many years to come. Now remember what I have said. When we leave this place, that little episode will steal back into a far corner of my mind. I shall, in short, forget it. If we are caught here, and inconvenience follows, well, I cannot say. Do your best, Meekins. Do a little better than your best. You have the reputation of being a strong man. Let us see you justify it."

The man took a long breath and returned to his task. His shoulders and arms were upon the door. He began

to strain. He grew red in the face; the veins across his forehead stood out, blue, like tightly drawn string. His complexion became purple. Through his open mouth his breath came in short pants. With every muscle of his body and neck, he strained and strained. The woodwork gave a little, but it never even cracked. With a sob, he suddenly almost collapsed. Mr. Fentolin looked at him, frowning.

"Very good—very good, Meekins," he said, "but not quite good enough. You are a trifle out of practice, perhaps. Take your breath; take time. Remember that you have another chance. I am not angry with you, Meekins. I know there are many enterprises upon which one does not succeed the first time. Get your breath—there is no hurry. Next time you try, see that you succeed. It is very important, Meekins, for you as well as for us, that you succeed."

The man turned doggedly back to his task. The eyes of the three men watched him—Mr. Dunster on the bed; Doctor Sarson, pale and gloomy, with something of fear in his dark eyes; and Mr. Fentolin himself, whose expression seemed to be purely one of benevolent and encouraging interest. Once more the face of the man became almost unrecognizable. There was a great crack, the trapdoor had shifted. Meekins, with a little cry, reeled and sank backward. Mr. Fentolin clapped his hands lightly.

"Really, Meekins," he declared, "I do not know when I have enjoyed any performance so much. I feel as if I were back in the days of the Roman gladiators. I can see that you mean to succeed. You will succeed. You do not mean to end your days amid objectionable surroundings."

With the air of a man temporarily mad, Meekins went back to his task. He was sobbing to himself now. His clothes had burst away from him. Sud-



denly there was a crash, the hinges of the trapdoor had parted. With the blood streaming from a wound in his forehead, Meekins staggered back to his feet. Mr. Fentolin nodded.

"Excellent!" he pronounced. "Really excellent! With a little assistance from our friend Meekins, you, I am sure, Sarson, will now be able to climb up and let down the steps."

Doctor Sarson stood by Mr. Fentolin's chair, and together they looked up through the fragments of the trapdoor. Meekins was still breathing heavily. Suddenly they heard the sound of a sharp report, as of a door above being slammed.

"Some one was in the boathouse when I broke the trapdoor," Meekins muttered. "I heard them moving about."

Mr. Fentolin frowned.

"Then let us hurry," he said. "Sarson, what about your patient?"

Mr. Dunster was lying upon his side, watching them. The doctor went over to the bedside and felt his pulse and head.

"He will do for twelve hours," he pronounced. "If you think that other little operation——"

He broke off and looked at Mr. Fentolin meaningly. The man on the bed shrank back; his eyes were lit with horror. Mr. Fentolin smiled pleasantly.

"I fear," he said, "that we must not stay for that just now. A little later on, perhaps, if it becomes necessary. Let us first attend to the business on hand."

Meekins once more clambered on to the little heap of furniture. The doctor stood by his side for a moment. Then with an effort he was hoisted up until he could catch hold of the floor of the outhouse. Meekins gave one push and he disappeared.

"Any one up there?" Mr. Fentolin inquired, a shade of anxiety in his tone.

"No one," the doctor reported.

"Has anything been disturbed?"

Doctor Sarson was some little time before he replied.

"Yes," he said, "some one seems to have been rummaging about."

"Send down the steps quickly," Mr. Fentolin ordered. "I am beginning to find the atmosphere here unpleasant."

There was a brief silence. Then they heard the sound of the ladder being dragged across the floor, and a moment or two later it was carefully lowered and placed in position. Mr. Fentolin passed the rope through the front of his carriage and was drawn up. From his bed Mr. Dunster watched them go. It was hard to tell whether he was relieved or disappointed.

"Who has been in here?" Mr. Fentolin demanded, as he looked around the place.

There was no reply. A gray twilight was struggling now through the high, dust-covered windows. Meekins, who had gone on toward the door, suddenly called out:

"Some one has taken the key! The door is locked on the other side!"

Mr. Fentolin's frown was malign, even for him.

"Our dear friend, Mr. Hamel, I suppose," he muttered. "Another little debt we shall owe him! Try the other door."

Meekins moved toward the partition. Suddenly he paused. Mr. Fentolin's hand was outstretched; he, too, was listening. Above the low thunder of the sea came another sound, a sound which at that moment they none of them probably understood. There was the steady crashing of feet upon the pebbles, a low murmur of voices. Mr. Fentolin for the first time showed symptoms of fear.

"Try the other door quickly," he directed.

Meekins came back, shaking his head. Outside, the noise seemed to be in-

creasing. The door was suddenly thrown open. Hannah Cox stood outside in her plain black dress, her hair wind-tossed, her eyes aflame. She held the key in her fingers, and she looked in upon them. Her lips seemed to move, but she said nothing.

"My good woman," Mr. Fentolin exclaimed, frowning, "are you the person who removed that key?"

She laid her hand upon his chair. She took no notice of the other two.

"Come," she said, "there is something here I want you to listen to. Come!"

### CHAPTER XXXV.

Mr. Fentolin, arrived outside on the stone front of the boathouse, pointed the wheel of his chair toward the Hall. Hannah Cox, who kept by his side, however, drew it gently toward the beach.

"Down here," she directed softly. "Bring your chair down the plankway, close to the water's edge."

"My good woman," Mr. Fentolin exclaimed furiously, "I am not in the humor for this sort of thing! Lock up, Sarson, at once—I am in a hurry to get back."

"But you will come just this little way," she continued, speaking without any change of tone. "You see, the others are waiting, too. I have been down to the village and fetched them up."

Mr. Fentolin followed her outstretched finger, and gave a sudden start. Standing at the edge of the sea were a dozen or twenty fishermen. They were all muttering together and looking at the top of the boathouse. As he realized the direction of their gaze, Mr. Fentolin's face underwent a strange transformation. He seemed to shrink in his chair. He was ghastly pale even to the lips. Slowly he turned his head. From a place in the roof of the boathouse a tall support had

appeared. On the top was a swinging globe.

"What have you to do with that?" he asked in a low tone.

"I found it," she answered. "I felt that it was there. I have brought them up with me to see it. I think that they want to ask you some questions. But first, come and listen."

Mr. Fentolin shook her off. He looked around for Meekins.

"Meekins, stand by my chair," he ordered sharply. "Turn round, I wish to go to the Hall. Drive this woman away."

Meekins came hurrying up, but almost at the same moment half a dozen of the brown-jerseyed fishermen detached themselves from the others. They formed a little bodyguard around the bath chair.

"What is the meaning of this?" Mr. Fentolin demanded, his voice shrill with anger. "Didn't you hear what I said? This woman annoys me. Send her away."

Not one of the fishermen answered a word or made the slightest movement to obey him. One of them, a gray-bearded veteran, drew the chair a little farther down the planked way across the pebbles. Hannah Cox kept close to its side. They came to a standstill only a few yards from where the waves were breaking. She lifted her hand.

"Listen!" she cried. "Listen!"

Mr. Fentolin turned helplessly around. The little group of fishermen had closed in upon Sarson and Meekins. The woman's hand was upon his shoulder; she pointed seaward to where a hissing line of white foam marked the spot where the topmost of the rocks were visible.

"You wondered why I have spent so much of my time out here," she said quietly. "Now you will know. If you listen as I am listening, as I have listened for so many weary hours, so many weary years, you will hear them

calling to me, David and John and Stephen. 'The light!—do you hear what they are crying?—'The light!—Fentolin's light!' Look!"

She forced him to look once more at the top of the boathouse.

"They were right!" she proclaimed, her voice gaining in strength and intensity. "They were neither drunk nor reckless. They steered as straight as human hand could guide a tiller, for Fentolin's light! And there they are, calling and calling at the bottom of the sea—my three boys and my man. Do you know for whom they call?"

Mr. Fentolin shrank back in his chair.

"Take this woman away!" he ordered the fishermen. "Do you hear? Take her away—she is mad!"

They looked toward him, but not one of them moved. Mr. Fentolin raised his whistle to his lips, and blew it.

"Meekins!" he cried. "Where are you, Meekins?"

He turned his head, and saw at once that Meekins was powerless. Five or six of the fishermen had gathered around him. There were at least thirty of them about, sinewy, powerful men. The only person who moved toward Mr. Fentolin's carriage was Jacob, the coastguardsman.

"Mr. Fentolin, sir," he said, "the lads have got your bully safe. It's a year and more that Hannah Cox has been about the village with some story about two lights on a stormy night. It's true what she says—that her man and boys lie drowned. There's William Green besides, and a nephew of my own—John Kallender. And Philip Green, he was saved. He swore by all that was holy that he steered straight for the light when his boat struck, and that as he swam for shore, five minutes later, he saw the light reappear in another place. It's a strange story. What have you to say, sir, about that?"

He pointed straight to the wire-encircled globe which towered on its slen-

der support above the boathouse. Mr. Fentolin looked at it and looked back at the coastguardsman. The brain of a Machiavelli could scarcely have invented a plausible reply.

"The light was never lit there," he said. "It was simply to help me in some electrical experiments."

Then, for the first time in their lives, those who were looking on saw Mr. Fentolin apart from his carriage. Without any haste, but with amazing strength, Hannah Cox leaned over, and, with her arms around his middle, lifted him sheer up into the air. She carried him, clasped in her arms, a weird, struggling object, to the clumsy boat that lay always at the top of the beach. She dropped him into the bottom, took her seat, and unshipped the oars. For one moment the coastguardsman hesitated; then he obeyed her look. He gave the boat a push which sent it grinding down the pebbles into the sea. The woman began to work at the oars. Every now and then she looked over her shoulder at that thin line of white surf which they were all the time approaching.

"What are you doing, woman?" Mr. Fentolin demanded hoarsely. "Listen! It was an accident that your people were drowned. I'll give you an annuity. I'll make you rich for life—rich! Do you understand what that means?"

"Aye!" she answered, looking down upon him as he lay doubled up at the bottom of the boat. "I know what it means to be rich—better than you maybe. Not to let the gold and silver pieces fall through your fingers, or to live in a great house and be waited upon by servants who desert you in the hour of need. That isn't being rich. It's rich to feel the touch of the one you love, to see the faces around of those you've given birth to, to move on through the days and nights toward the end, with



them around; not to know the chill loneliness of an empty life. I am a poor woman, Mr. Fentolin, and it's your hand that made me so, and not all the miracles that the Bible ever told of can make me rich again."

"You are a fool!" he shrieked. "You can buy forgetfulness! The memory of everything passes."

"I may be a fool," she retorted grimly, "and you the wise man, but this day we'll both know the truth."

There was a little murmur from the shore, where the fishermen stood in a long line.

"Bring him back, missus," Jacob called out. "You've scared him enough. Bring him back. We'll leave him to the law."

They were close to the line of surf now—they had passed it, indeed, a little on the left, and the boat was drifting. She stood up, straight and stern, and her face, as she looked toward the land, was lit with the fire of the prophetess.

"Aye," she cried, "we'll leave him to the law—to the law of God!"

Then they saw her stoop down, and once more, with that almost superhuman strength which seemed to belong to her for those few moments, she lifted the strange object who lay cowering there high above her head. From the shore they realized what was going to happen, and a great shout arose. She stood on the side of the boat and jumped, holding her burden tightly in her arms. So they went down and disappeared.

Half a dozen of the younger fishermen were in the water even before the grim spectacle was ended; another ran for a boat that was moored a little way down the beach. But from the first the search was useless. Only Jacob, who was a person afflicted with many superstitions, wiped the sweat from his forehead as he leaned over from the bow of his boat and looked down into that fathomless space.

"I heard her singing, her or her wraith," he swore afterward. "I'll never forget the moment I looked down and down, and the water seemed to grow clearer, and I saw her walking there at the bottom among the rocks, with him over her back, singing as she went, looking everywhere for George and the boys!"

But if, indeed, his eyes were touched with fire at that moment, no one else in the world saw anything more of Miles Fentolin.

## CHAPTER XXXVI.

Mr. John P. Dunster removed the cigar from his teeth, and gazed at the long, white ash with the air of a connoisseur. He was stretched in a long chair, high up in the terraced gardens behind the Hall. At his feet were golden mats of yellow crocuses; long borders of hyacinths—pink and purple; beds of violets; a great lilac tree, with patches of blossom here and there forcing their way into a sunlit world. The sea was blue, the sheltered air where they sat was warm and perfumed. Mr. Dunster, who was occupying the position of a favored guest, was feeling very much at home.

"There is one thing," he remarked meditatively, "which I can't help thinking about you Britishers. You may deserve it or you may not, but you do have the most almighty luck."

"Sheer envy," Hamel murmured. "We escape from our tight corners by forethought."

"Not on your life, sir," Mr. Dunster declared vigorously. "A year or less ago you got a North Sea scare, and, on the strength of a merely honorable understanding with your neighbor, you risk your country's very existence for the sake of adding half a dozen battleships to your North Sea squadron. The day the last of those battleships passed through the Straits of Gibraltar, this

little conference was plotted. I tell you they meant to make history there. There was enough for everybody—India for Russia, a time-honored dream, but why not? Alsace-Lorraine and perhaps Egypt, for France; Australia for Japan; China and South Africa for Germany. Why not? You may laugh at it on paper, but I say again—why not?"

"It didn't quite come off, sir," Gerald observed.

"It didn't," Mr. Dunster admitted, "partly owing to you. There were only two things needed—France to consider her own big interests and to ignore an entente from which she gains nothing that was not assured to her under the new agreement; and the money. Strange," Mr. Dunster continued, "how people forget that factor, and yet the man who was responsible for the Hague conference knew it. We in the States are right outside all these little jealousies and wrangles that bring Europe, every now and then, right up to the gates of war, but I'm hanged if there is one of you dare pass through those gates without a hand on our money markets. It's a new word in history, that little document—news of which Mr. Gerald here took to the Hague, the word of the money kings of the world. There is something that almost nips your breath in the idea that a dozen men, descended from the Lord knows whom, stopped a war which would have altered the whole face of history."

"There was never any proof," Hamel remarked, "that France would not have remained stanch to us."

"Very likely not," Mr. Dunster agreed; "but, on the other hand, your country had never the right to put such a burden upon her honor. Remember that side by side with those other considerations, a great statesman's first

duty is to the people over whom he watches, not to study the interests of other lands. However, it's finished. The Hague conference is broken up — Gee whiz! What's that?"

There was a little cry from all of them. Only Hamel stood without sign of surprise, gazing downward with grim, set face. A dull roar, like the booming of a gun, flashes of fire, and a column of smoke, and all that was left of St. David's Tower was one tottering wall and a scattered mass of masonry.

"I had an idea," Hamel said quietly, "that St. David's Tower was going to spoil the landscape for a good many years. My property, you know, and there's the end of it. I am sick of seeing people for the last few days come down and take photographs of it for every little rag that goes to press."

Mr. Dunster pointed out to the line of surf beyond.

"If only some hand," he remarked, "could plant dynamite below that streak of white, so that the sea could disgorge its dead!"

Mrs. Seymour shivered a little. She drew her cloak around her. Gerald, who had been watching her, sprang to his feet.

"Come," he exclaimed, "we chose the gardens for our last afternoon here, to be out of the way of these places! We'll go round the hill."

Mrs. Fentolin shook her head once more. Her face was serene again.

"There is nothing to terrify us there, Gerald," she declared. "The sea has gathered, and the sea will hold its own."

Hamel held out his hand to Esther.

"I have destroyed," he said, "the only house in the world which I possess. Come and look for violets with me in the spinney, and let us talk of the houses we are going to build, and the dreams we shall dream in them."

# The Permanent Brand

By Berton Braley

WHEN I was a maverick runnin' free  
The West she took an' she branded me,  
Marked me deep with that special brand  
That she puts on sure in that Western land;  
An' after that christenin' occurred  
She turned me loose with her own big herd.

But I was allus a stray at heart  
An' I roamed all over the bloomin' chart  
From North to South an' from West to East  
I sure was kind of a restless beast,  
An' I mixed with herds of a hundred kinds,  
—The sorts that a maverick critter finds,  
But wherever I chanced to take my stand  
They piped me off by my Western brand!

I've tried to hide it—but what's the use?  
I've tried to beat it an' wander loose,  
But somethin' gets me an' brings me back  
To the old-time herd on the old-time track,  
Fer that brand ain't one you twist an' change  
To suit each rancho you want to range,

Fer it's burnt deep down in your heart an' soul  
An' it won't come out till you join the roll  
Of them that's finished, as all things shall,  
By findin' a place in the last corral!  
—An' I ain't sure but the Western brand  
Won't still show plain when we come to stand  
Where the Boss of the Final Round-Up picks  
The first-class lot from the mavericks!



# When Greek Meets Greek

By Foxhall Williams

*Author of "The Politician," Etc.*

What are you going to do with the ball player who is a .350 hitter but insists that his forte is pitching—and the less said about his twirling the better! Searles is the stubborn player in question, and he won't sign a contract unless he joins the pitching staff. This is the ghastly proposition confronting the manager of the team: turning the best outfielder in baseball into a third-class pitcher! There was a way out of the tragedy; but it took some fine diplomacy to find it.

JAKE BURMAN, who had been only a prominent ice-cream manufacturer until he made himself financially responsible for the Union League baseball club, that was to fight for local patronage with the Blues, world's champions of the previous autumn, smiled wisely to himself as he entered the lobby of the San Rosa Hotel and saw Terry Magee chewing moodily on a cigar that had gone out. He wasn't surprised to see Terry, who was manager of the Blues; neither was he surprised to see that Terry was not happy. He approached the manager with a genial air and the proffer of a fresh cigar. Nor did Terry's rejection of the cigar, curtly pronounced, dissuade him from dropping into the next chair.

"You don't like your smoke, Terry," he diagnosed. "Better change your mind. This is a good one."

"So's mine," grunted Terry, giving his own statement the lie by relighting his cigar. It is a tribute to Burman's courage that he faced the cloud of acrid smoke that was the result. "What d'you want, anyhow?" Terry went on ungraciously.

"Not a thing, Terry—not a thing in the world!" replied Burman. "I'm as happy as the day is long—except when I think of you trying to keep the Blues in the league!"

Terry bristled. "You can keep right on being happy, then," he said. "You'd better forget the Blues, and start worrying about your own bunch of has-beens."

"Has-beens? Funny! You seemed to think Hammond was a pretty good catcher last October."

Terry reeled mentally. Burman got no satisfaction from looking at him, but he could guess what was going on behind Magee's impassive face.

"Signed with us half an hour ago," Burman went on. "And you can't get him back with an injunction, either. He hasn't got a contract—and your people cross the street every time they pass the courthouse, they're so afraid some one will drag that reserve clause in front of a judge!"

"Huh!" Terry made a ghastly attempt to smile. "You're stringing me. Spike Hammond knows better than to jump the Blues! You'll be telling me you've got Tommy Searles, next!"

"Maybe," said Burman. "We're after him. His contract expired last season, too. If you want to keep him you'd better get busy."

Terry ignored this. He was thinking hard. The loss of Hammond, the only veteran catcher the outlaw raid had left him, was a body blow—and there was something convincing about Burman's manner. And, with a lot of green pitchers to be broken in, he needed Hammond. Burman eyed him keenly; then decided that the psychological moment had come.

"What's the use, Terry?" he said. "You're one game guy—and I'm strong for you; we all are. I hate to break up your team, but you know what Sherman said about war—and this is it! You're a great manager, but what can you do with what we've left you? You've got a club that would finish ninth if there were nine clubs in the league—and you'll be left holding the bag! Will the fans figure that your team was shot to pieces? You know they won't. They'll roast you for not winning another flag. Come on over with us—you can manage my team, right here in your own town. You'll have Hammond and a lot of others from the old Blues—and you can have your pick of every man that's signed a Union contract. We want a winner in this town. And, as for money——"

Terry was on his feet. His eyes were alight, and he dropped his cigar and stepped on it.

"What's the idea?" he asked gently. "Want me to get from under?"

"Sure—you're on!" said Burman. "Come in out of the rain—you don't want to be the last to leave a sinking ship."

Mixed metaphors—but Terry understood. The tongues of his ancestors spoke in him. "Nothing doing!" he said. "I'll stick to the Blues—and I'll bring them home to another pennant—or change my name to Schmidt!"

On the word, he went away. He was afraid to stay longer. His hands were itching to busy themselves about Burman as it was. And that was Terry Magee all over. If Burman had come to him, early in the campaign, and offered him big money to jump, he might have listened to the siren song that greenbacks sing. But to offer him a chance to squirm out of what looked like a losing fight——

"I'll cop that flag if he don't leave me anything but the grounds!" swore Terry Magee.

Burman left him a little more than that, but not much. Most managers would have pronounced the task that Terry faced when it was time to go South a hopeless one. Two or three veterans had refused to go to the new league; one or two substitutes, seeing in the wreck of the old champions a chance to become regulars, stood firm. To fill the gaps, Terry had raw stuff. Like all good managers, he had, assigned to bench-warming duty, or being wet-nursed in the minors, future stars whose possibilities were suspected by no one but himself. In time they would be all right. But they were men he had planned to work into his team one by one, as veterans wore out, so that they could gain their seasoning with men already tried, to play beside them; to pitchfork them into a hot campaign suddenly meant that fully half of them would be irretrievably spoiled.

But that was what he had to do, and Terry was not the man to waste regrets. He took a squad of recruits South; a week before it was time to turn toward the North he had a ball team. And he was still wondering what had become of Tommy Searles, whom Burman had threatened to get. If Searles reported, he felt that he had a chance. With Searles in the outfield, his new, rough structure would have a solid foundation.

Magee had won two pennants now

with only one great star on his team—this same Searles, who had batted over .350 in each of four league seasons, and led the league in base running for two years. The Blues under Terry hadn't been made up of star players. They won flags by virtue of the perfection of the teamwork that Terry had built up. Aside from Searles, none of them had been wonders. Almost every team in the league could show a man for each position better than the Blue who played that position, in individual talent. It wasn't until you saw them working together, as a team, that you could understand why they cantered home so consistently.

It was just such another machine as his old pennant-winning team that Terry was trying to build up in those Texas days. He drove his recruits like a Simon Legree. Two things he sought passionately: one was speed, the other brains, the ability to think quickly and to the point. And, finally, though he knew that the new team would fall far below the standard of the old one, he was satisfied—provided Charley Bates, owner of the Blues, had kept Searles from the Union League dragnet. The team would do; considering the fact that the Blues had not been alone in losing good men to the outlaws, it had more than an even chance to win.

But Searles he had to have. And one morning, smoking his after-breakfast cigar on the porch of the hotel in the training town, he saw Searles himself trudging toward him from the station, with a suit case and an expansive smile! Loafing along beside his star was a boy, who carried a yellow envelope. But Terry ignored the boy. He was not the first man who has let his eyes pass unseeingly over the messenger of fate.

"Hello, boss!" said Searles happily, as he dropped his suit case and held out his hand. "Got snowed in up in the woods—that's why I'm late!"

Terry achieved diplomacy, and a smile.

"Where's your contract?" he asked. He hung breathlessly on the answer.

"Guess they've got it at the office by this time," said Searles.

"Your name Magee?" inquired the boy. At Terry's absent nod, he delivered a telegram, and slouched away, after Terry had signed for it. The manager tore it open, read it, with a gathering frown, and turned to Searles.

"What's all this?" he asked. "The boss says you wrote a clause in your contract that you were a pitcher, and signed as one?"

The lines in Searles' face fell into a pattern that Terry knew well; it meant that the star had made up his mind to something. He came from Missouri, did Searles, and he resembled the mules that have helped to make that great State famous in one respect; he was just as obstinate.

"That's right, Terry," he said, breathing heavily. "When I signed up first I was pitching for the Dukes, and you bought me for a pitcher. You said you'd give me a chance in the big league, and I was pitching for them when——"

"Yes—and you'd be pitching yet if I hadn't grabbed you when I did—pitching hay!" snapped Terry. "You had a manager who didn't know a three-hundred hitter when he saw one. But even he was getting onto you—with a little help from the Class D teams that were batting you out of the box every time you went in——"

"I had a sore arm when you saw me," Searles protested, an injured note in his voice. "I was in there with nothing but my glove and a prayer. And you promised me a chance to pitch if I'd help you out by playing the outfield till my arm got better! It's all right now—and you've never given me a chance."

"Now, listen here," said Terry per-



suasively. "You want to forget that. You don't think you're a Matty or a Walter Johnson, do you?"

"I've never had a chance to find out," said the aggrieved Searles plaintively.

"Well," said Terry, "you'd have to be, to get a chance to pitch. You might be a good enough pitcher to win half your games—and every club in the league is glad of a pitcher who can do that. And still you'd be worth more in the outfield, with your batting and your base running. Can't you see that?"

"I like to pitch," said Searles doggedly. "That's the point. See?"

"I see that you're a nut!" snapped Terry, flinging patience to the winds. "I'd hate to bump against your dome on a dark night. Ivory—if any one ever bounced a billiard ball off your bean it'd crack! Harveyized steel—that's what they handed you for a head-piece!"

Searles only grinned. He was used to Terry's rages.

"Well, it's in my contract," he said philosophically. "The big boss wired it was all right. So I threw down the Union League people. Say—I'd better get into a suit and get some practice."

When he was alone, Terry read the telegram from Bates again, and then tore it into little pieces and walked on it. Bates had explained, at letter length, that the only way to get Searles under contract was to accept his terms, foolish as they were, since the Burman scouts had promised to do so if the Blues did not. "Depend on you to talk him out of it," Bates added.

Magee's rage was dissipated as soon as it occurred to him to laugh. Then he went out to the practice grounds and began the work of polishing his newly constructed team—a task necessarily deferred until he had Searles.

"You've got your contract," he told Searles. "Now, be reasonable. I

need you in the outfield to get this bunch started right. And, besides, there's a whole lot of fans who don't know this about you're being a pitcher. You want to break it to them gently. See?"

"Oh, sure," said Searles, glad the storm was over. "I don't mind playing the outfield for a few weeks, as long as it's in my contract that I'm a pitcher."

So the team moved north, playing strong minor-league clubs, and getting shaken together in the process. Searles played the outfield, and Terry observed, with delight, that he was the same old Searles. And there was no more talk of turning the best outfielder in baseball into a third-class pitcher. Terry neither thought of nor mentioned his star's crazy idea until he met Bates, when the club reached the home town the day before the opening of the season. They laughed at the freak clause in the contract, but then Terry frowned at it, with narrowed eyes.

"There's just one thing bothering me," he said. "Tommy's a great ball player, and all that, and he can think quick enough on the field. But he's no intellectual giant when it comes to contracts and things like that. Who put him up to this stunt? I've got a hundred that says he never got the hunch himself."

"Oh, it's just like him—the old nut!" said Bates. "He'll never think of it again. Don't let that lie on your mind, Terry."

"I won't," promised Terry. "I'll be too busy. But—I'd rest easier if I didn't think Burman or some one that's working for him had framed it up."

"Forget it," advised Bates. "What good would it do them? By the way—they've got Billy Dunlop for manager of their team here. The Rebels, the newspaper boys are calling them."

"Billy Dunlop, eh?" said Terry. "He's about as crazy as a fox. Some

one in our league pulled a bone when they let him get away. At that, a chance to work in as a manager is about all that would have got him away from the Whales. He's been wanting that for quite a spell—and no one had sense enough to give him a try-out. Gee—he'll give us something to do!"

It has been indicated before that Terry Magee was not in the habit of running away from a fight. He met Billy Dunlop, against whom he had played for years, an hour later, told him he was glad he was to manage the Rebels—and meant it.

"But there's no room for you in this town, Billy," he said.

"Oh, I don't know," said Dunlop. "This Burman's got money, and it don't seem to hurt him much to spend a dollar—if he sees a chance to get two back. I guess we'll make out. I hear Searles is going to pitch for you?"

At the sight of the twinkle in Dunlop's eye Terry stiffened.

"You don't want to believe everything you hear," he advised.

The Blues got away to a good start; so did the Rebels. The Union League hadn't left much to chance in the case of the Rebels. Once the outlaws began playing, of course, the games had to be decided on the merits of the teams involved; any attempt to throw the pennant to a favored team would have brought down the wrath of the fans on those responsible. But the pick of all the big leaguers who had jumped came to Billy Dunlop, and it was almost a foregone conclusion that the Rebels would win the first Union League pennant.

That made it more than ever important for the Blues to stay up in the race. Baseball fans are fickle; they like a winner. In most cities sentiment cuts very little figure. It is what a team is doing, not what it has done, that fills its park. The Blues, winning

or losing, could count on a few thousand loyal rooters. But the great mass of fans would follow the Rebels without hesitation, if they were winning while the Blues were slipping down.

Both the teams opened at home, and they divided the patronage very evenly. The Blues had their prestige as champions; the Rebels had a powerful magnet in public curiosity concerning them. Burman, who was proving himself a shrewd baseball politician, had figured, when the new league's schedule was made out, in getting all that was to be had out of that curiosity. But after the opening week he had avoided conflicts until the return of the Blues from their first Western trip.

"They'll have hit the toboggan by then," had been his prophecy. "Then we'll step in, play against them every day, and leave them holding the bag."

Good reasoning; all that went wrong with the prophecy was that the Blues returned from the West in second place, a game and a half behind the leaders, and fighting as if possessed of seven devils. Terry Magee never let them find out how bad they were. He kept them so busy that they were glad to curl up and sleep when they weren't playing or practicing, and ceaselessly he dinned aggressiveness into them. He spoiled the naturally good dispositions of a lot of amiable young athletes, and acquired for his club a reputation as the worst aggregation of crabs and umpire baiters since the day of the old Baltimore Orioles. But it had to be done.

Terry would have scorned the imputation that he was a psychologist. But he knew what would happen if the Blues ever let go; if they once started to slide. Nothing would hold them. They didn't have the reserve power, the recuperative force that distinguishes a good veteran club. When they lost a game now they were heartbroken about it. Angry disputes broke out in the



dressing room, and Terry, smiling in his sleeve, threw in a provocative word here and there that fanned the flames. That sort of dissension is good for a ball club; especially such a young club as the Blues. Terry watched them through the first weeks of that season with all the feelings of a young mother. Let them win a pennant, and he had, he knew, a club that would stay near the top for years. For that would give them the confidence, the seasoning, they needed.

The fans saw no reason to turn from the Blues to the Rebels while both teams were winning. Attendance at the Blues' park fell off, but not seriously, and Burman began to wear a worried look, and to lose his appetite. The Rebels were losing money pretty fast; Burman could see a time coming when a good appetite would only be an annoyance to him, anyhow.

Terry Magee's lightheartedness increased in direct proportion to the growing gloom at the rebel headquarters. And then, one evening, he met Tommy Searles, walking, arm in arm, with Billy Dunlop—and Dunlop winked at him. Terry woke up two or three times in the night to wonder what that meant. In the morning he found out.

"Say, Terry," said Searles. "Isn't it about time you let me do some pitching? I've been playing the outfield for quite a while."

"For the love of Mike—haven't you got over that bug yet?" inquired Terry. "Man, dear—you're batting better than you ever have—you've got a start toward a base-stealing record—and you want to pitch!"

"It's in my contract," said Searles sullenly. "Why don't you watch me? Let me get a catcher right now. Hey—Farrell!"

Farrell came over, mitt in hand. He grinned when Searles told him what he wanted.

"All right—shoot 'em in," he said.

For five minutes Searles warmed up. He had a motion that he must have acquired from observation of all the freak deliveries in both leagues. And Magee threw up his hands when the five minutes had elapsed.

"Now, be good, Tommy," he pleaded. "You're a bum pitcher. But I tell you what I'll do. I'll let you pitch once in a while, if you'll play the outfield the rest of the time."

But Tommy would have none of that. He developed an artistic temperament, a valuable possession which baseball players sometimes share with grand-opera singers.

"Nix, Terry!" he said. "I know what's due to my arm! I want to take my turn with the rest of the boys in the box, and rest up while I'm not working."

Farrell looked for an explosion. But it did not come. Terry remembered the contract—and the suspicious behavior of Billy Dunlop. He was silent for a time.

"I'll think it over, Tommy," he promised.

Terry hoped, against hope, that Dunlop really had had nothing to do with the sudden revival of his star's notion. Searles might forget, with a little time. But he didn't. And, within a week, he forced a show-down—for which Magee was prepared.

"I want an answer, Terry," said Searles. "Are you going to let me pitch or not?"

"I am not!" said Terry, and stared at him.

"That's all I want," said Searles doggedly. "That's a violation of my contract—and I've got witnesses. I'm a free agent after that. Get me?"

Terry only stared at him unblinkingly. And that night's evening papers exploded a bomb among the fans. Tommy Searles, it was announced, had jumped the Blues and signed to play



with the Rebels. The reason was set forth, and the roar of laughter that greeted it was even greater than the gasp of astonishment at the desertion of Terry's star.

Charley Bates wasn't happy. He had known what was coming, for Terry had told him.

"I've never interfered with you yet, Terry," he said. "When it comes to doing that, I'll get a new manager. But—well, I hope you're not making a mistake."

"Figure it out for yourself," said Terry. "The big stiff's no good to us as a pitcher. I couldn't let him work—because having him in the box would be just the one thing needed to send the team up in the air. So we'd lose him anyhow. You don't know this team we've got yet. Losing Searles is going to make them so mad that they'll play better than they know how. And—well, Billy Dunlop may think he's put one over on me, but I'm not so sure."

Billy Dunlop plainly did think just that. So did the papers and the fans. And, though the Blues, as Terry had predicted, played harder than ever, the loss of a man who could be counted on to drive out a safe hit once in every three trips to the plate was a big handicap.

Terry Magee was not the least interested of those who crowded the Rebel park the day that Searles made his debut as a big-league pitcher. He stole an afternoon from his own team to be on hand. And he was one of those who almost suffered apoplexy when Searles actually won his game!

"The big nut!" he murmured to himself, in dazed astonishment. "Well—there's no use talking! 'You've got to hand it to Billy Dunlop!'"

Not that Searles proved himself a great pitcher, or even a good one. The day of miracles is past, and it would be verging on the miraculous for a

pitcher pronounced worthless by Terry Magee to prove himself a star. But—he had a great team behind him, a really wonderful team. Billy Dunlop had taken a collection of brilliant individual players at the beginning of the season, and turned them into what such clubs rarely become—a finished, smooth-working team. A pitcher didn't have to be very good to get away with his game with the Rebels behind him. Moreover, his catcher was the great Brent, who had, in his time with the Leopards, done more to establish the reputations of pitchers than any man in either league. Searles showed only the most ordinary curves, but he had control, and he put the ball exactly where Brent, who knew the weakness of every opposing batter, told him to. Magee went back to his own club, thinking hard.

"Well?" said Bates sarcastically. "I stood for it, Terry, but maybe you'd have done better to kid him along. He got away with it all right to-day."

"Hold your horses," advised Magee. "Don't think for a minute that Billy Dunlop intends to use him as a pitcher. He's got something up his sleeve—and I've got a hunch I know what it is, too. And you want to remember that I know Tommy Searles pretty well. I'm not through with him yet."

But, despite Terry's brave words, dark days were coming for the Blues. Fight as they would, they couldn't overcome the handicap they had suffered in the loss of Searles. As long as he was pitching Searles didn't strengthen the Rebels, but they didn't particularly need strengthening. They were sure of a pennant without him; adding him to the pay roll was like gilding the lily. The point was that his loss weakened the Blues. Charley Bates got a chance, soon after his desertion, to reduce expenses, already cut by the elimination of the star's sal-

ary, still further by dropping some ticket sellers, who promptly got jobs with the Rebels. Searles was a big drawing card.

But as a pitcher, he began to go bad after pitching a few fair games for the Rebels. He seemed to have trouble with his arm—which was duly reported to Terry Magee, who had spies in the Rebel camp, as Dunlop did in his. Terry grinned. And one night, after a game in which Searles had been batted from the box by a weak team, Terry met him, as the result of a carefully planned accident. That was in the lobby of Searles' hotel, and he had no chance to dodge his former manager, from whom he looked for recriminations. He was surprised by Terry's mildness.

"Hello, Tommy," said the manager. "Been to a show? Come have a bite!"

He linked his arm in Tommy's, and bore him off, despite the ball player's feeble protests. And, over a rabbit, Terry looked at his lost star with sympathy in his eyes.

"Treated you pretty rough to-day, didn't they?" he said.

"Aw—I didn't have a thing on the ball," said Searles. "My arm wasn't right. You wait and see what I do to that bunch of hams the next time!"

"That's the eye—keep right after them, Tommy," said Magee. "You want to work hard over that old soup bone of yours, Tommy. It'll keep you in the big show quite a while yet if you're careful."

"Huh?" grunted Searles, in amazed inquiry.

"Usually it's the other way round, though," said Magee musingly. "Lots of pitchers get to be outfielders when their arms go back on 'em. Like Cy Seymour, and Harry Wolter. But I don't know that I ever heard of an outfielder turning pitcher when he lost his batting eye!"

"What d'ye mean lost his batting eye?" demanded Searles hotly.

"I'm not saying you used me just right, Tommy," Magee went on, ignoring the question. "I always tried to give you a square deal. And if you'd come right out, and owned up that you were losing your batting clothes, I'd have tried to help you turn into a pitcher. But, not knowing that, I naturally wanted to keep you in the garden——"

"You're crazy with the heat!" said the outraged Searles. "I——"

"Still, I haven't any hard feelings, at that," said Magee. "A man's got to feather his own nest—and I suppose you stung the Rebels for a good, fat wad. It's your play to get the dough while the getting's good—before every one gets on to you——"

"You're raving!" cried Searles. "My eye's all right—I can bat as well as ever!" He stopped suddenly in some confusion. "I haven't had a hit in the last two or three games, but——"

"Oh, all right, all right, Tommy," said Magee, in the tone of one who humors a child or a sick person. "Sure you can bat as well as ever if you say so. But every one's talking about it of course——"

Every one was—if, by every one, you understand to be meant those who had been carefully coached by Magee to meet Searles, always by carefully prearranged accidents, and talk to him. Many of these, it chanced, were Tommy's former teammates of the Blues. And when Searles finally escaped from his well-meaning friends that night, he went home, pondering the little slump in batting of which, before his meeting with Magee, he had scarcely been conscious at all. Which was precisely what Magee had intended him to do.

From that day the disintegration of Searles' brief reputation as a pitcher proceeded rapidly. He was sent back at the team that had knocked him from



the box, after a two-day rest, and was batted out again, even more quickly. Magee's scouts informed him that Searles was complaining of a sore arm, and that the ministrations of a rubber specially assigned by the worried Dunlop only seemed to make it worse. Terry only grinned. And he grinned still more widely when he was told that Dunlop had suggested that, in order to give his arm a rest, Searles should play the outfield for a while, so that he might stay in condition and incidentally earn his salary.

But Terry did more than grin at that news. He got busy. By underground methods of his own he saw to it that the pitchers of the team that was to play the Rebels when Searles went back to the outfield were supplied with a chart of the star's weaknesses—and, also, though he avoided Searles himself, he arranged for various Blues to meet him and condole with him on the injury to his arm and the slump in his batting.

That slump, as a matter of fact, was of natural origin. Every great batter has such periods, when he can't hit a balloon—fate had so willed it that this was the first Searles had experienced. Terry knew what had started it; would have been willing to predict it. When a man has been accustomed to playing every day, his hitting is almost sure to suffer when he gets into a game only once or twice a week. And Terry's own shrewd condolences on the night of that rabbit supper had supplied the finishing touch, by making Searles worry about his hitting. Terry felt that his hour was at hand, but he took no chances. Confiding in only one man, Fred Harvey, his ground keeper, he resorted to an old device—and sat back to wait.

Roars of applause greeted Searles when he took his place in left field for the Rebels; louder roars swept the stands when he strode to the plate,

dragging two bats in the dust. And the fact that he got no hits in the first two or three games didn't cause any diminution of the cheers. He was out of practice; that was all. Or so it seemed. But when day followed day and he walked to the plate, time after time, only to strike out on a bad ball, or pop up a puny fly, the cheers changed to jeers. It doesn't take long to dethrone a baseball idol. The populace is always testing his feet, to see if, perchance, they have turned overnight to clay.

Searles didn't like it. Terry Magee, who was getting reliable information about him, needed none to tell him that Searles was worrying about his long-continued batting slump. He could see it for himself; just as he could see that Billy Dunlop, who had been strangely happy at the collapse of Searles' pitching ability, was also worried. And Terry was in a mood to celebrate on the day when Searles, so recently the pet of the crowd, walked to the plate in a ninth-inning pinch to hear yells of: "Take him out! Put in some one who can hit!"

That day Searles turned and shook his fist at the jeering crowd. And when a ball player loses his temper under roasting from the fans his days are, as a rule, numbered. The next day Searles adorned the bench. Dunlop gave him chance after chance, after that; Searles couldn't make good. He made an occasional hit, but the old sure confidence had oozed out of him.

It was a humble and disillusioned Searles that Terry met one evening again, seemingly by accident, after he had avoided him for weeks.

"Hello!" he said. "What's the matter? You look as if you'd lost your last friend?"

"They won't give me a chance," Searles complained bitterly. "I run into a batting slump—and they stick me on the bench! Dunlop won't let



me pitch! I'm sick of that whole outfit! I'd give something to be shut of them."

"Dunlop won't let you pitch, eh?" said Terry wisely. "Did he say so—where any one could hear him?"

"Yep! That's breaking my contract with him—but what's the use? I don't suppose you'd take me back, would you, Terry?"

Magee shook his head.

"Don't see how I could, Tommy," he said. "The way you've been going lately you're not much good."

"They've got my goat out there at the Reb park," said Searles dolefully. "I never will be any good there. Say—give me a chance! I'll be able to take my turn in the box, Terry—honest I will. Even if I can't hit any more."

"I'd do a lot for you, Tommy." Magee looked dubious. "But—well, I dunno—oh, I might take a chance, at that. Would you sign a regular player's contract—so that I can use you anywhere?"

"Sure I would!" said Searles, with a pitiful eagerness. "I'm sore at that other crowd, anyhow."

It is a curious thing that, considering the reluctance with which Magee agreed to take Searles back, he should have been able to produce a contract, filled in, except for signatures. But Searles did not notice that. He was too glad to scrawl his name in the proper place.

"I'm going to send you away for a week," said Magee. "You'll go to Atlantic City with Fred Harvey—and if he catches you even thinking baseball he'll pound you to a pulp! Go swimming—loaf. Eat five times a day—roll along the board walk in a wheel chair! But forget baseball!"

Terry, of course, could have explained the disappearance of Searles. Billy Dunlop, who had his own idea of the way to end that batting slump, might not have enjoyed the explana-

tion, but it would have ended his uncertainty. Terry, however, chose to maintain silence. And, on the day of Searles' return, when the faithful few thousand who still stuck to the Blues had spread out in the yawning stands, Searles, unnoticed, was on the bench a full hour and a half before game time.

Terry kept him there during the game.

"Feeling better?" he had asked, when Searles reported.

"Fit as a fiddle," said Searles—and looked it. Plainly, he had been making up lost sleep.

The Maroons were playing the Blues that day, and Curtis, their star pitcher, was having one of his good days, which made the fact that the Blues opened the ninth inning on the short end of a 2—0 score in no way remarkable. But in that ninth inning, with one man down, an error put a man on first. The next batter forced him; Farrell, the catcher, got a base on balls. Then, with two out, two on, and a good hit needed to tie the score, Terry waved his pitcher back to the bench when that youth was looking for a bat.

"Go on up and bring in those runs, Tommy," he said to Searles.

"Me?" Searles stared at him. "Gee—better pick some one else, Terry—I ain't hitting——"

"You heard me, didn't you?" gritted Searles. "Haven't turned yellow, have you?"

Searles flushed and leaped for the row of bats. As his familiar figure bent over them a yell of amazement burst from the stands. And as he strode to the plate, dragging two sticks in the dust, the yell turned into an ovation that continued after he had faced the pitcher. The umpire grinned at him.

"Tip your lid, Tommy," he said. "These folks are for you."

They were! These were faithful Blue rooters—not the turncoats who had hooted him at the Rebel park. Dazed, but delighted, Searles touched his cap mechanically, and the roar died away and gave place to a breathless hush as he glared at the pitcher, swinging his bat slowly. Once more Magee had proved himself a psychologist. That roar of greeting had done what Dunlop's nagging could never have accomplished. Curtis wound up; the ball floated up. But Tommy knew that ball of old. He knew just when it would break and slip into Randall's extended mitt. And at just the proper moment his bat crashed into it, and sent it tearing on a line past the third baseman.

Both the base runners breezed home; the score was tied. And, in a Niagara of sound, Searles himself slid safely into third. A moment later he came home with the winning run.

"Gee!" he gasped, as Terry slapped him on the back. "Soft picking! And they had me conned into thinking I couldn't hit any more!"

There is an epilogue to this tale—a brief one. Months later, after the warring leagues had made peace, Terry Magee and Billy Dunlop met and cracked a cold bottle together in New York.

"You old pirate!" said Dunlop affectionately. "You double-crossed me on that Searles deal! Own up now—how did you do it?"

There was an innocent look in Terry's blue eyes.

"I didn't have a rubber lame his arm on purpose, did I?" he said. Dunlop grinned confession. "But I'm not saying that maybe I didn't help that batting slump along—by having the boys talk to Searles. And—you didn't have any one in your center-field bleachers watching Fred Harvey after Tommy went back to the outfield for you, did you? There's a place there where the sun strikes a pocket mirror so that the light goes right back into a batter's eyes!"

"Give me that check!" said Dunlop to the waiter. "This drink's on me!"



## THE KINDNESS OF MR. DANIELS

**R**ICHMOND P. HOBSON, who became a hero because of his gallantry in the United States navy during the Spanish-American War, ran for the United States senatorship in Alabama against Oscar W. Underwood last April and was badly beaten. One of the big planks in the Hobson platform was prohibition.

Soon after the smoke of battle had cleared away in the Southern State, Mr. Daniels, the secretary of the navy, issued his famous order abolishing the wine mess on battleships and in navy yards.

The day following this order a newspaper correspondent stationed at the White House inquired of a senator hostile to Hobson:

"Senator, what do you think of the Daniels order about the wine mess?"

"Why," replied the senator, "the thing is as clear as day. It was built for Hobson. He has had two professions—the navy and liquor reform. Now that Underwood has beaten him for the Senate, he can join the navy again and work at both his professions."

## A Chat With You

WHEN two small boys fall a-fighting, the spectacle is comic rather than tragic, plenty of sound and fury, but little damage. When the same thing happens between two grown men it is more serious. Whatever may be our feelings as to the prize ring, a street fight is almost always shocking and brutal. A nation in the same state of development as the small boy may enter into a war without much more serious consequences to its national happiness and prosperity than the small boy suffers to his clothes and countenance. The epic combats of Achilles and Hector before the walls of Troy were disastrous enough finally to Hector, but in spite of the sacking of the old town, we doubt if the people of Asia Minor bothered very much about it, and certainly the skin-clad herdsmen in Greece went about their daily pursuits during the long years of the siege as if nothing in particular were the matter. They had no war taxes to pay, and as Achilles pointed out to Agamemnon the Trojans were not in a position to steal any of their cattle. The fighting was done by those who liked to fight. They furnished their own weapons and commissariat. Fighting was a good way for the adventurous young man to get a start in the world, and although there were events sanguinary enough, we suspect that for years at a time the military operations of both Greek and Trojan were like those of the majority of dogs then and now—a great deal of bark and very little bite.

PRIMITIVE nation is a young organism just as the small boy is, and, like the small boy, is distinguished by great resiliency and recuperative

power rather than by punishing force. We read of the Hundred Years' War and the Eight Years' War and the Thirty Years' War, when Tilly and Pappenheim and Wallenstein marched and countermarched and intrenched themselves the breadth and length of Germany. If a war between any of the great powers to-day were to last for thirty years it would depopulate a good portion of the earth, and set back the hands of civilization all over the world. Man has lost nothing of his determination and courage with the passage of the centuries. He is slower to fight, but once engaged in war he shows the same stubborn pugnacity and self-sacrifice that carried him such a long way upward in the scale of evolution in the past. He has developed tremendously in powers of organized effort. The historian of the future may tell, but no one who knows to-day *dare* tell, the terrible price that was paid when Jap and Russian met bayonet to bayonet in the Manchurian trenches. The wounds that England received in her conflict with the Boers are scarcely healed, and she is no richer for her conquest. No man who is not overcivilized but feels some stir within him at the flash of arms, the roll of drums, and the sense of organization and power that a marching army shows, but no man who is civilized should forget that the only good thing war calls forth is heroism, that the evils it brings are incalculable, that in it the best and bravest are always sacrificed. Short and sanguinary as the wars of the future must be, there is little chance for the man in the ranks to win success. As a calling it has been more and more highly specialized, as a method of settling either great questions of right and wrong or



**A CHAT WITH YOU—Continued.**

racial supremacies it becomes less and less effective and expedient, as an agency for destruction it has become more terrible and menacing.



**R**EFLECTIONS such as these make us think that a man who risks his life to prevent a war may be spending his life to just as good a purpose as those who died in battle in the past. And it is for this reason that we are especially interested in the book-length novel which appears complete in the issue of *THE POPULAR*, out two weeks from to-day. It is called "Fountain Island," and was written by Frank Blighton, whose story, "Fate Plays Some Massé Shots," you read in a recent issue of the magazine. Valjean Borden, who is the principal character in the narrative, is a scientist and laboratory worker who has discovered on a trip in the Pacific something that puts him in possession of one of the most valuable and important secrets in the world. He is commissioned by the representative of a very wealthy man to go from New York to the northern Pacific to do some scientific work there in connection with his discovery. At the same time he finds himself harassed and shadowed by a number of men who do everything possible to hamper him, and whose purpose is, for a time, a mystery. At the outset of the story it is only Borden's natural determination to do the work that he has set out to do and is paid for that pushes him ahead through discouragement and difficulties, but later on a bigger and nobler motive supplies him with driving energy. As the story opens the United States is on the verge of war with one of the great powers. You get a glimpse of the state

department, of the secret work of the men who form the government, of their heavy perplexities and responsibilities. Behind the romance of Borden's adventurous enterprise is the shadow of something bigger and more sinister. Instead of a man risking his life for an individual, Borden becomes one who is fighting a desperate game against odds, with the peace and prosperity of the United States as a stake. We can't tell you more without spoiling something of the freshness and interest of the narrative as Mr. Blighton writes it. We've read a good many novels in our day, but none quite like this.



**J**UST setting aside "Fountain Island," which is a complete dollar-and-a-half book in itself, there is enough in the July month-end issue of *THE POPULAR* to make it the best fiction number on the stands. There's a splendid story of a varsity boat race by Daniel Steele, and another of Holworthy Hall's delightful stories of college life. There's a story of big business by George Randolph Chester, who can write better stories about big business than any one we know. Then there's another big section of B. M. Bower's great four-part story of the West, which gets better and better as it goes on. Also there is a really thrilling story of an automobile race by Edward Lyell Fox, and the first half of a two-part story of a South American revolution by Clarence Cullen. There's a story of a scoreboard boy who was once a prize fighter, by Robert Emmett MacAlarney, another Western story by Frederick Niven, and a story showing baseball from a new angle by Bozeman Bulger. Altogether, it's the kind of a magazine we would like to read all over again for the first time.





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The Trained Man

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# Summer Bargains in Stylish Apparel

Warm weather is here—the time of year when it is so hard to *look* cool and well-dressed, and *feel* that way, too. Neat dainty frocks of fine crisp sheer lawn or loose-fitting, simple yet stylish silk blouses, like the models shown on this page, will go far towards solving the problem of summer comfort and good looks. Examine the illustrations of these charming up-to-date styles, read the descriptions and *note the prices*. These are real warm weather bargains, guaranteed to be exactly as represented, and are convincing examples of Bellas Hess Values. We Pay All Mail or Express Charges, not only on these garments, but on ANYTHING you buy from us.

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**4R872—Dainty Frock** of a fine striped washable Lawn. Dress is made in one piece with short kimono sleeves joined to body of waist by colored piping. Model is cut in a V at neck and has collar and cuffs of white Swiss embroidery. The stylish cutaway tunic hangs free over skirt from waistline, and is finished with a double ruffle of self material trimmed with piping. Waist and skirt are joined by a piped belt. Skirt is plain with a stitched plait down center of front. Dress fastens in front with pearl buttons. Colors: blue and white, black and white or lavender and white stripe with piping to match. Sizes 32 to 44 bust measure, skirt length 40 inches. **Special Summer Bargain Price, All Mail or Express Charges \$1.00**  
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**6R96—Chic Summer Hat** for Ladies or Misses, made of beautiful quality soft, flexible Wool Felt. Has soft crown and flexible adjustable brim, trimmed around with Roman-striped band in harmonizing colors. Diameter of brim 13 inches. Colors: white or navy blue with Roman striped band. A big bargain. **\$1.25**  
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**2R97—Smart Blouse** of fine quality striped Japanese Silk. A beautiful soft lustrous fabric which is all pure silk. Stylish pointed effect Georgette collar is of sheer white organdie, and the cuffs which finish the short sleeves are of organdie to match. Blouse fastens with fine pearl buttons and has elastic band at waist. Colors: white ground with blue, lavender or black stripes. Sizes 32 to 44 bust measure. **Special Summer Bargain. Price, Postage Paid by Us... \$1.00**

**6R98—Watteau Hat.** The very latest Fifth Avenue model, becoming to all types of faces, made of finely woven glossy Japanese Split Straw. Has slightly drooping brim and low flat crown. It is worn tilted becomingly slightly to one side and has straw band beneath covered with velvet ribbon, finished with a velvet bow. Top of hat shows a tasteful velvet ribbon bow and band trimming arranged around the brim. Colors: black with green velvet, also in burnt-straw trimmed with black velvet. Splendid value. **Special Price, Postage Paid by Us... \$1.98**

**2R99—Fashionable Dresden Flowered Blouse** of beautiful quality soft Japonika Silk (a mixture of silk and cotton) having silk Jacquard polka dots in self color, and beautiful two-toned Dresden figures. Blouse is cut very full. Has short kimono style sleeves, also the new semi-standing Georgette collar of white organdie and turnback organdie cuffs to match. The vest effect in front is also of organdie and the waist fastens with tiny crochet buttons. Comes in white with two-toned Dresden flowers, and Copenhagen blue with two-toned Dresden flowers. Sizes 32 to 44 bust. A wonderful value at this low price. **Price, Postage Paid by Us \$1.00**

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## “Look, What a Grouch!” *He* Hasn’t B. V. D. On.

SUN aflame—coat on arm—handkerchief in hand—head drooping—brow dripping—spirits low—nerves “on hair-trigger”—how hot *he* is without easy-breezy B. V. D.—literally “rolling in discomfort.”

*They* swing along, unmindful of the heat, heads high, eyes bright, bodies cool, minds clear, muscles taut and faculties alert. *You*—on with B. V. D. and *feel* and *look* cool. Stop at the first store you come to and say, “I want B. V. D.”

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B. V. D. Coat Cut Undershirts and Knee Length Drawers, 50c, 75c, \$1.00 and \$1.50 the Garment.

B. V. D. Union Suits (Pat. U. S. A. 4-30-07) \$1.00, \$1.50, \$2.00, \$3.00 and \$5.00 the Suit.

**The B. V. D. Company,**  
New York.

London Selling Agency: 66, Aldermanbury, E. C.





The readers of the magazine may write to this department about any problem of dress. Every question will be promptly answered, provided that a stamped, self-addressed envelope is enclosed.

**I**NSTEAD of the dark, heavy, heating clothes, which are rack and thumbscrew on grilling days, we shall wear both lighter weights and lighter colors this summer. The white flannel trousers and white buck shoes, illustrated here, are typical of the drift of fashion toward garments and accessories which are more in accord with season and reason in weight, texture, and color. More silk suits, silk and linens, white ducks, mohairs, and the like will be worn this year than ever before.

This summer, the secret password to "smartness" is naturalness — that seeming artlessness which is the perfection of art. Your jacket may be wrinkled as a raisin, provided that the wrinkles look as if they "just grew there."

The creases are put in at the small of the back above the center vent. This is done by cutting the jacket very scant and making it draw or pucker, sometimes to such a degree that the vent splits and the skirts "hunch" over the hips, as when you thrust

your hands into your trousers pockets.

For a year and a half, the mode has been veering away from the low-crown, flat-brim derby toward the tapering, oval-crown shape. It is the accepted form now.

"Smarter" yet and just dawning in the offing of fashion is a totally new English derby with a very high, squarish crown and a very wide silk ribbon.

In sailor straws, it is settled that tallish crowns, narrowish brims, and "sawtooth" edges will be "the thing."

While broad-spaced, cutaway-front collars, and full-knot four-in-hands are preferred by youngsters, the really "smart" summer neck scarf is the soft, pointed, open-end bow.

This cannot be worn with any but a close-front collar, and hence this shape is marked for a revival this summer.

Gloves with backs ornately silk-embroidered in "ditto" or different colors are much in vogue, though they are not new.

The couvelitte-collar shirt, pictured in the ac-



*Tennis Hat and Convertible Collar Shirt.*



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Any dealer who offers you a combination of equipment, including any other lighting system, will give you Prest-O-Lite instead, if you insist. And if you know the facts, you will insist. Tear off on the dotted line, write your name and address below and mail it for complete information about motorcycle lighting.

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companying drawing, is so constructed that the collar may be worn buttoned around the neck, or may be tucked out of sight, and the neck and throat left free, as in the sketch. This type of shirt is tiptop for tennis, golf, and all outdoor sports. It is made with sleeves either to the elbow or to the wrist.

Golfers are very partial to Norfolk jackets with slit shoulder seams and



*White Flannel Trousers and White Buck Oxfords.*

strap backs together with the plaid "knickers." Long trousers are out of fashion for this game. Calks are preferred to hobnails on golf shoes, as they give a firmer brace in the ground.

A novel Tuxedo shirt for summer has a silk body and sleeves, and limp piqué double cuffs. The bosom is finely tucked, and each tuck—there are some fifty of them—is stitched with a wavy black thread, lending a shadowy grayish cast to the whole bosom. The cuffs are black-stitched a quarter inch from the edge. Altogether, a very "smart"



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SUPPOSE your wife, mother or sister, left alone in the house, should wake up tonight and find a burglar in her room. What would she do?

Suppose she were left alone and a tramp, drunkard or sneaking criminal should enter the house and attack her. What could she do by way of resistance?

*Nothing.* Absolutely nothing! She would be *helpless*—helpless as a little child.

Get her the "human arsenal"—the new Savage Automatic. We call it a pistol, but, in reality, it should be called a "human protector" in the condensed form of pocket arm. It converts your home from a helpless, defenseless egg-shell of a place, into an arsenal. It actually makes a woman able to put up a crack shot's defense. For any novice can aim it as expertly as any crack shot. Show her how she can shoot once for each trigger pull; how she can tell at a glance or a touch if it is loaded.

Shoots ten shots—double the number of an ordinary revolver—two more than other automatics. The only automatic that guards her against the old excuse "didn't know it was loaded." .32 and .380 calibre.

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## A Brand New Savage Rifle!

THE new Savage .22 Tubular Repeater has all the original Savage features—hammerless, trombone action, solid breech, solid top, side ejection, etc. Price \$12. Send for circular.

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**Red or Black "Vulcan" Ink Pencils**  
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## Write Today!

Right now, and we will send you the announcement of this remarkable new motorcycle type "Arrow" with full details of machine and astonishing bed rock direct offer. Send a postal now with your name and address. **TODAY SURE.**

**ARROW CYCLE CO.**

Dept. 114Y, 19th St. and Cal. Ave., CHICAGO, ILL.

## HUNTERS -- TRAPPERS

If you want an ideal lamp for night fishing, trapping, hunting or for work about farm or machinery, send to-day for a



### Baldwin Lamp

Projects a 14 candle power light 150 feet. Burns Acetylene Gas. Weight 2 oz. Height 3 1/2 in. Can be carried in hand or worn on cap or belt, leaving both hands free. No oil, soot or glass. Absolutely safe and simple. Fifty hours bright light costs 75c. Useful as well during Automobile repairing. Catalogue free and instructive booklet, "Knots and How to Tie Them" mailed on request.

At all dealers or by **JOHN SIMMONS CO.**  
mail prepaid - \$1.00 131 Leonard St. New York City

## \$130 The Greatest Motor Boat For The Money Ever Built

**MULLINS 16 foot special steel launch** affords the pleasures of motor boating, and provides a safe, seaworthy, dependable motor boat, with graceful lines and beautiful finish—**Absolutely Guaranteed Against Puncture**—Safe as a life boat, with air chambers concealed beneath decks in bow and stern—Can't warp, split, dry out or rot—No seams to calk—No cracks to leak.

**MULLINS \$130 Special Launch** is equipped with 2-Cycle, 3-H. P. Ferro engines, that can't stall—Speed 8 1/2 to 9 miles an hour—One man control—Fitted with **MULLINS** silent under-water exhaust.

This 16 footer seats 3 people comfortably—has 4 foot beam and 11 foot 4 inch cockpit—Positively the greatest launch value ever offered. Write today for beautifully illustrated motor boat catalog, containing full particulars.

**THE W. H. MULLINS COMPANY**

326 Franklin St. Salem, Ohio, U. S. A.  
THE WORLD'S LARGEST BOAT BUILDERS

**MULLINS STEEL BOATS CAN'T SINK**



shirt to accompany the dining jacket or for the "hop" at the "Casino."

Though few men distinguish between sticks for lounging and for "occasion," there is a well-defined gulf between them. The stick for the races, for a cross-country or knapsack tramp, for week-ends, for sport meets, and the like should always be gnarled, rough-hewn wood of the partridge clan, and even more knotty, often looking as though it had been cut from the roadside.

Contrariwise, for "occasion" one should carry sticks of smooth-grained woods, and ebony is now at the height of its vogue. The polished sticks are essentially for urban use—the rougher ones for the country. One's stick may be as perfectly attuned to time and place as any other belonging of dress, and, indeed, it is niceties like these which betray the stickler for "the big, little things." Like a pipe, there's something very human and companionable about a stick.

For wear with white flannels, the new white felt hat is "smart." It is made without a lining, has a round crown and a narrow silk flowing-end ribbon, black or in colors. The base of the crown is perforated all the way 'round, letting a current of air circulate inside.

In swimming suits, the newest consists of a white knitted shirt and blue flannel "knickers" to be worn with a white canvas belt. This white-and-blue color theme is engagingly picturesque.

The change from dark to bright colors in men's dress is exemplified by the newest straw hats, which are lined with gay tartan plaid silks, in addition to having vivid ribbons.

In soft-brim straws, the season's favorites are Leghorns and Panamas with scooped crowns and broad, flapping brims. Then there are the Mackinaws, Milans, and Bangkoks for older men.

Knitted overcoats are much worn during the summer for cool nights in the country, traveling on the water, and motoring.

These overgarments are much softer and lighter than woven coats, and just as warm. They came into vogue about a year ago, and since then they have gained appreciably in the good graces of well-dressed men. **BEAUNASH.**



## EYEGLASSES NOT NECESSARY

**Eyesight Can Be Strengthened, and Most Forms of Diseased Eyes Successfully Treated Without Cutting or Drugging.**

That the eyes can be strengthened so that eyeglasses can be dispensed with in many cases has been proven beyond a doubt by the testimony of hundreds of people who publicly claim that their eyesight has been restored by that wonderful little instrument called "Actina." "Actina" also relieves Sore and Granulated Lids, Iritis, Cataracts, etc., without cutting or drugging. Over one hundred thousand "Actinas" have been sold, therefore the Actina treatment is not an experiment, but is reliable. The following letters are but samples of hundreds we receive:—



Mr. David Suttle, Glen Ellyn, Ill., writes: "I sent for your 'Actina,' and when it came I told my wife I would throw my glasses away and give the 'Actina' a fair show. I did so, following directions, and soon felt my eyes were getting in normal condition again and now I can say my eyesight is as good as ever, and my headaches practically vanished."

Mr. Emery E. Deitrick, 7124 Idlewild Street, E. E. Pittsburg, Pa., writes: "My eyes were very weak, and my vision was so bad that I could recognize people only at short distances. Since using 'Actina' I have discarded my glasses, my headaches are gone, and my vision, I believe, is as good as ever it was."

Mr. J. H. Frankenfield, 322 E. 20th Street, Cheyenne, Wyo., writes: "Regarding what the 'Actina' has done for me, I am proud to say I am not wearing my glasses at all. As for my cataract, it is almost gone and I have been troubled with it for more than sixteen years. "A great number of my railroad friends are buying 'Actinas,' as you know by the orders you have received."

"Actina" can be used with perfect safety by every member of the family for any affliction of the eye, ear, throat or head. A Free trial of the "Actina" is given in every case.

Send for our FREE TRIAL offer and valuable FREE BOOK. Address Actina Appliance Co., Dept. 96N, 811 Walnut St., Kansas City, Mo.

It came from  
**LOFTIS**  
**DIAMONDS ON CREDIT**

**Great Bargain Sale**

These handsome Diamond Rings are our Great Leaders. Finest Quality pure white Diamonds, perfect in cut and full of fiery brilliancy. Mountings are 14k Solid Gold. Always the leading favorites.

**CREDIT TERMS: One-Fifth Down, Balance in 8 Equal Monthly Amounts.**

Write for Free Catalog. Over 2,000 beautiful illustrations of Diamonds, Watches, Jewelry, Silverware. Select anything desired, have it sent to your home or express office, all charges prepaid. If entirely satisfactory, send us one-fifth of the purchase price and keep it, balance in eight equal monthly payments. Send for catalog today—NOW.

**LOFTIS BROS. & CO.**  
National Credit Jewelers  
Dept. 8845, 108 N. State St., Chicago, Ill.  
Stores also in Pittsburgh; St. Louis; Omaha.

**SPECIALS**

536	\$25
528	\$50
533	\$65
534	\$90

**WHITE VALLEY GEMS LOOK LIKE DIAMONDS**

Stand acid and fire diamond test. So hard they easily scratch a file and will cut glass. Brilliance guaranteed 25 years. Mounted in 14k solid gold diamond mountings. See them before paying. Will send you any style ring, pin or stud for examination—all charges prepaid. No money in advance. Money refunded if not satisfactory. Write today for free catalog.

**WHITE VALLEY GEM CO., 708 Wulsin Bldg., Indianapolis**

**We Trust You!**

and furnish everything to start you in this big money business. We send the wonderful **Filmless Post Card Camera** at once—you pay us later out of your profits. No films, plates or dark room—a complete studio in itself. Takes 5 sizes of post cards; also photo buttons.

**\$50 TO \$100 A WEEK EASY**

"snapping" people at Fairs, Bathing Beaches, Parks, Carnivals. No experience needed; nets you 8¢ profit on every dime. Write today for FREE particulars.

**FILMLESS POST CARD CAMERA WORKS**  
2223 W. 12th St., Dept. D733, Chicago, Ill.

**DELATONE**

**Removes Hair or Fuzz from Face, Neck or Arms**

Delatone is an old and well-known scientific preparation, in powder form, for the quick removal of hairy growths—no matter how thick or stubborn they may be. A paste is made with some Delatone and water, then spread on hairy surface. After two or three minutes it is rubbed off and the hairs have vanished. When the skin is washed it will be found to be white, firm and hairless. Delatone is used by thousands of people and is highly recommended by Mrs. Mae Martin, the authority on "Beauty."

Druggists sell Delatone, or an original one-ounce jar will be mailed to any address upon receipt of One Dollar by

**THE SHEFFIELD PHARMACAL COMPANY**  
3255 Sheffield Avenue—Dept. B. F.—Chicago

**Here's the best made .22 Rifle in the world!**

It's the only .22 repeater made with the dependable lever action—like a big game rifle. It has better weight, better balance, greater stability than any other .22. It's guaranteed in accuracy and reliability; handles rapidly. It gives 25 shots at one loading.

**Model 1897 .22 Calibre Repeating Rifle**

Shoots .22 short, .22 long, and .22 long-rifle cartridges without adjustment.

For rabbits, squirrels, hawks, geese, foxes, for all small game and target work up to 200 yards, just get this **Martin**.

It's a take-down rifle, convenient to carry and clean. Has tool steel working parts that cannot wear out. Beautiful case-hardened finish; superb build and balance. Ivory bead and Rocky Mountain sights; the best set furnished on any .22.

The solid top and side ejection mean safety and rapid, accurate firing.

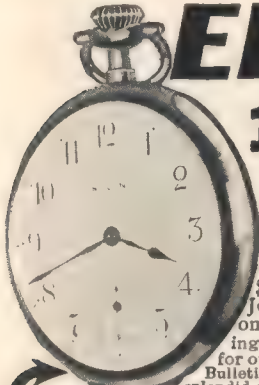
Ask your dealer—or send us 3 stamps postage for new big catalog of all **Martin** repeating rifles and shotguns.

**The Martin Firearms Co.**  
9 Willow Street New Haven, Conn.

**Marlin**

Please mention this magazine when answering advertisements.





# ELGIN

## 17-Jewel

### Only \$9<sup>75</sup>

Think of it! Only \$9.75 for a genuine 17-jewel Elgin! Sold to you on terms on a great sweeping watch offer. Write at once for our new catalog and Special Bulletin, showing not only this splendid opportunity but hundreds of other big jewelry offers.

## Monthly Payments

Only \$1.00 per month and you can become the owner of a genuine Elgin 17-jewel watch—\$1.00 down and \$1.00 a month—total price of \$9.75.

## DIAMONDS

Pure color flashing stones now offered along with our other jewelry opportunities. Here is a resplendent, solitaire, genuine diamond ring; selected, glittering, pure colored diamond, in 14 karat gold ring. Sold to you on the easiest terms—only a small amount down, then a very small payment each month.

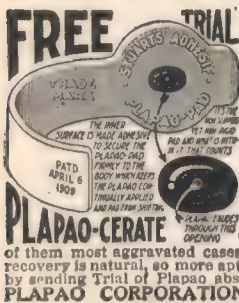
No. A104 14 karat solid gold ring, set with Men's round Belcher style perfectly cut diamond. \$25.25 down, \$2.50 per month. Price \$34.50

**Free Trial** We give you a positive 30-Day Free Trial on any article bought from us. 30 entire days to make up your mind whether you wish to keep it. And if for any reason you are not satisfied return to us and we will return every cent you have paid most cheerfully.

## Big Jewelry Book FREE!

Send today for our big jewelry catalog and special 30-Day Bulletin. These show the most remarkable offers all sold on terms of \$1 a month and up. **STRAUS & SCHRAM, Inc.** Dept. 82Y 35th Street Chicago

## Don't Wear A Truss



**Stuart's PLAPAO-PADS** are different from the truss, being medicine applicators made *Self-Adhesive* to prevent slipping, and the resultant chafing and shifting of the pad out of place and against the bone; they have, therefore, proven to be an important adjunct in retaining rupture that cannot be held by a truss.

**No Straps, Buckles or Springs** attached. *Soft as velvet—easy to apply— inexpensive.* Awarded Gold Medal, Rome Grand Prix, Paris. Old and young have attested under oath that the *Plapao-Pads* cured their rupture—some of them most aggravated cases. No delay from work. Process of recovery is natural, so more apt to be permanent. We "show you" by sending Trial of *Plapao* absolutely **FREE**. Write for it today, **PLAPAO CORPORATION**, Block 1376 St. Louis, Mo.

## We Loaned Money

Yes, thousands of dollars on magnificent diamonds listed in our **FREE Bargain Bulletin**. Write for it today—the prices will astonish you.

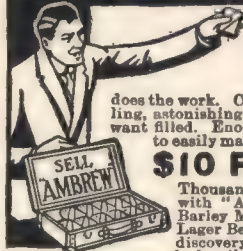
**See This!** No. 847714, 1-7-1, A kt. blue-white perfect cut quality diamond solitaire, set in lady's regulation ring, shipped for free examination. Try to match it \$70.00. Guaranteed cash loan \$25.00. Our unredeemed price \$35.45.

**Money Back Guarantee** We pay expressage and run all risk of pleasing you in the examination. Money back if unsatisfactory to you—though always exactly as represented. Rated over three quarter million dollars.

## Write Today for Free Bulletin

Send at once for our latest Bargain Bulletin, giving startling prices on diamonds, watches and other jewelry. Your money's worth plus 75 to 100 per cent on unredeemed pledges. Write today sure. **Jos. DeRoy & Sons** 1143 DeRoy Bldg. Pittsburgh, Pa. Smithfield Street Over 60 years same location Only Opposite Postoffice

# AGENTS



Here's a live proposition. Just out, nothing else like it. **CONCENTRATED BEER TABLETS**. Everyone can now have a good glass of Beer whenever they want it. A few minutes does the work. Carry right in your pocket. Startling, astonishing, tremendous seller. A long-felt want filled. Enormous demand. An opportunity to easily make over

## \$10 PROFIT A DAY

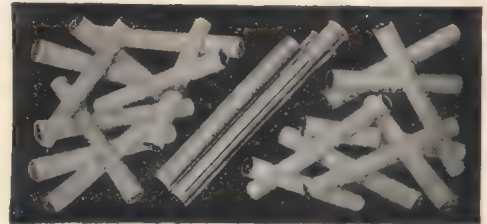
Thousands now making their own Beer with "AMBEU." A concentration of Barley Malt and Hops. A real sparkling Lager Beer at one cent a glass. Startling discovery has excited everyone. Everybody wild about it. Wanted everywhere—dry or wet—strictly legitimate. Show it—sell them all. Thousands sold daily. Get in early for territory. Costs nothing to investigate, just a postal—today. Spend a cent to make thousands. Ask for agents terms, sample proposition **FREE** **THE AMBEU CO., Dep't 1397 CINCINNATI, OHIO.**

## WE WILL MAKE YOU PROSPEROUS

If you are honest and ambitious write us today. No matter where you live or what your occupation, we will teach you the Real Estate business by mail; appoint you Special Representative of our Company in your town; start you in a profitable business of your own, and help you make big money at once. Can arrange for spare time only if desired.

Unusual opportunity for men without capital to become independent for life. Valuable book and full particulars **Free**. Write today.

**NATIONAL CO-OPERATIVE REALTY CO.**  
P-1687 Marden Building, Washington, D. C.



## YOU CAN MAKE CIGARETTES LIKE THESE

A Practical Novelty for Cigarette Smokers

## TURKO CIGARETTE ROLLER

Sent postpaid for 25 cts. Address,

**Turko Roller Co., Box 38, Station H, New York City**

## My Magazine "Investing for Profit"

### FREE for Six Months

Send me your name and address right NOW and I will send you *Investing for Profit* magazine absolutely free for six months. It tells how to get the utmost earnings from your money—how to tell good investments—how to pick the most profitable of sound investments. It reveals how bankers and capitalists make \$1,000 grow to \$22,000—in fact gives you the vital investing information that should enable you to make your money grow proportionately. I have decided this month to give 500 six month subscriptions to *Investing for Profit* FREE! Every copy is

### Worth at Least \$10

to every investor—perhaps a fortune. Send your name and address now, mention this paper and get a **Free** introductory subscription. Conditions may prevent repeating this offer. Better take it now. You'll be willing to pay No 6 copy after you have read it six months.

**H. L. BARBER, Pub., R418 30 W. Jackson Blvd., Chicago**

## No Plates—No Films New Camera Just Out



This wonderful camera makes pictures DIRECT ON POST CARDS without films, plates, printing or dark room. Camera weighs about 24 ounces and measures about 4 x 4½ x 6 in.; size of pictures, 2½ x 3½ in. Loads in daylight with 16 or 50 cards at one time—no dark room necessary. Universal focus lens produces sharp pictures at all distances. Perfect working shutter. Combined "3-in-1" Developer eliminates any other solution. Pictures develop automatically in less than a minute—can't over-develop. Plain instructions with each outfit enable you to begin making pictures the very hour outfit arrives. SEND FOR THE OUTFIT TODAY.

### THE CHICAGO FERROTYPE CO.

Δ805 Ferrotype Bldg. Chicago, Ill. or Dept. Δ805, Public Bank Building 89-91 Delancey St., New York, N. Y.

HERE at last—the very camera you have always wanted—a camera for man, woman or child. No experience needed to operate. Amazing invention. Think of it! Pictures taken and finished on the spot in a minute's time.

### The "Mandel-ette"

A one minute camera. Eliminates films, plates, printing and dark room. No fuss, muss or trouble. No developer worries. Pictures cost you only 1½¢ each to make. Great camera invention. Get a "Mandel-ette" for your vacation. Use it for all occasions. You can't afford to be without one.

### Special Money Back Offer

We are the inventors and manufacturers of the "Mandel-ette" Camera and want everybody to own one. We sell it direct to you and at rock bottom price. Order from this ad; make pictures with the camera; and if it does not do all we claim, we will refund your money. This fair offer fully protects you.

### \$5.00 COMPLETE OUTFIT

(80¢ extra by parcel post) Outfit includes "Mandel-ette" Camera and supplies to make 16 finished pictures, \$1 additional for tripod. Extra cards, 25¢ per pkg. of 16. You begin making pictures at once. Don't wait—Order now.

**FREE BOOK** about this new picture-taking method of picture-taking is yours for the asking. Write today. Learn of the advantages, the actual big saving in making pictures with the "Mandel-ette." You can use the camera for profit too and earn money selling one minute pictures. Send for book today.

*Keeps After Opening*

# BLUE LABEL KETCHUP

Choice, red-ripe tomatoes, cooked lightly, pure spices, cider vinegar and sugar—all blended so carefully that the true tomato taste is retained. Prepared in sanitary kitchens by skillful chefs, Blue Label Ketchup is of unvarying excellence—comes to you in sterilized bottles, and is

**Delicious — Appetizing — Satisfying**

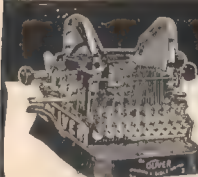
*Contains only those ingredients  
Recognized and Endorsed  
by the U.S. Government*

Ask your grocer for our Soups, Jams, Jellies, Preserves, Meats, Canned Fruits and Vegetables. They are—each one—equally as high quality and satisfying as Blue Label Ketchup.

Write for our instructive booklet "Original Menus." It will help you in solving that "next meal" question. A postal mentioning your grocer's name, and this magazine, will bring it.

**Curtice Brothers Co.**  
Rochester, N. Y.





## 13¢ a Day!

Don't pay rent, don't buy a "blind" out-of-date typewriter when you can own this genuine Oliver-Vieljeux for only 13¢ a day. We save you \$41.50. No Agents. Sent on Free Trial. Write for book, facts and low price.

**Typewriters Distributing Syndicate**  
166-T17 N. Michigan Blvd. Chicago

## YOUR NEWS DEALER

maintains his store at considerable expense. He must pay for help, rent and lighting. He carries many articles that you would never dream of ordering direct from manufacturers, and is, therefore, of great service when you need a newspaper, a cigar, or a box of stationery. Then why not give him all of your custom and so help make his business profitable?

Tell him to show you samples of AINSLEE'S, POPULAR, SMITH'S, PEOPLE'S, NEW STORY and TOP-NOTCH magazines. Select those you want and he will gladly deliver them to your residence regularly.

Then, when you want something good to read, you will not have to search for it.

**STREET & SMITH, Publishers, New York**

Please mention this magazine when answering advertisements.



# IMPROVE YOUR COMPLEXION



## CUTICURA SOAP

Assisted when necessary by light touches of Cuticura Ointment does much to prevent pimples, blackheads and other unsightly eruptions, cleanse the scalp of dandruff, allay irritation, arrest falling hair and promote permanent skin and scalp health.

Cuticura Soap and Cuticura Ointment are sold throughout the world. Send post-card to nearest depot for free sample of each with 32-page book: Newbery, 27, Charterhouse Sq., London; R. Towns & Co., Sydney, N.S.W.; Lennon, Ltd., Cape Town; Muller, Maclean & Co., Calcutta and Bombay; Potter Drug & Chem. Corp., Boston, U.S.A.

Men who shave and shampoo with Cuticura Soap will find it best for skin and scalp.

## Asthma AND Hay Fever

Send for Free Trial Bottle of **HIMALYA**, the valuable remedy for Hay Fever and Asthma. We have hundreds of reliable testimonials showing positive and permanent cures to persons who have suffered for years after other remedies and change of climate had failed.

Write today to the

**HIMALYA CO.**  
84 Warren Ave. W.  
Detroit, Mich.



## Wrinkles

Thousands have successfully used this formula to remove traces of age, illness or worry: 1 oz. of pure

## Powdered SAXOLITE

dissolved in  $\frac{1}{2}$  pt. witch hazel; use as a face wash. The effect is almost magical. Deepest wrinkles, crow's feet, as well as finest lines, completely and quickly vanish. Face becomes firm, smooth, fresh, and you look years younger. No harm to tender skin. Get genuine Saxolite (powdered) at any drug store.



### 10 Days Free Trial. Send No Money

**32 Hair Switch on Approval.** Send lock of hair and I will match and mail a fine 22 in. short stem human hair switch—wavy or straight. A bargain. Remit \$2 in ten days or sell 3 and get your switch free. Extra shades a little more. Enclose 6c postage. Write today for free beauty book of latest styles hair dressing, hair goods and ornish feathers. **WOMEN'S AGENTS**  
Anna Ayers, 220 So. State St., Chicago **WANTED**



25 years on the market. Sold by all druggists wherever heads ache. Twelve wafers for 25 cents—or send 10 cents for trial sample—three doses.

The Zymole Co., 108 John St., New York





## "The Coast Line to Mackinac" "Mackinac Island Is Calling You"

Where the waters of Lake Michigan meet Lake Huron, lies this historic summer resort of the north country. It was never so beautiful as now. The cool breezes, the beautiful scenery, the primeval woods, and smiling waters, with rowing, sailing, fishing, bathing, golfing and sight-seeing, furnish endless amusement for every minute of your stay. First class hotel accommodations and boarding houses at reasonable rates. For recreation and rest, Mackinac Island is the ideal spot.

### SIX TRIPS WEEKLY

from Detroit to Mackinac Island. Special Steamer, two trips weekly from Cleveland direct to Mackinac Island, making no stops enroute except at Detroit every trip.

This is a particular steamer for particular people. No extra fare charged, and sale of tickets limited to sleeping capacity of steamer. Direct connections at Detroit with Coast Line Steamers.

**Your Railroad Tickets** are available for transportation on D. & C. Line steamers between Detroit and Buffalo or Detroit and Cleveland, either direction. Information regarding routes and rates furnished on request. For illustrated pamphlet and Great Lakes map, write including two cent stamp to

**Detroit & Cleveland Navigation Co.**  
14 Wayne Street,  
DETROIT, MICHIGAN

PHILIP H. McMILLAN, Pres.  
A. A. SCHANTZ, Vice-Pres. and Gen'l Mgr.  
L. G. LEWIS, Gen'l Pass. Agent.

*All D. & C. Steamers arrive and depart from  
New Third Avenue Wharf, Detroit.*



## 12 DAY ALL EXPENSE \$60<sup>00</sup> NORTHERN CRUISE 60<sup>00</sup> UP

*Seeing the Wonderful Northlands and Foreign America*

including all essential expenses, visiting HALIFAX, NOVA SCOTIA, the land of Evangeline, and ST. JOHNS, NEWFOUNDLAND, the Norway of America.

This cruise to these foreign lands on the new steamships "STEPHANO" and "FLORIZEL" of the

### Red Cross Line

will prove the most novel, delightful and health-giving vacation you ever experienced.

The foreign cities of Halifax and St. John's, with the beautiful Nova Scotia and grand Newfoundland scenery, are sights never to be forgotten.

The ships are built especially for tourists; are fitted with every modern device to insure safety and comfort. Splendid cuisine, orchestra and sea sports. You spend 7 days at sea and 5 days in port, giving ample time for sight-seeing. No hotel bills or transfers. You live on the ship. Send for handsome booklet No. 42.

*Reduced Rates, superior accommodations, Sept. and Oct.*

**BOWRING & CO.**  
17 Battery Place, New York



Please mention this magazine when answering advertisements.

## What will Mrs. Grundy say?—Nothing.

---

For Mrs. Grundy is no more. In the July AINSLEE'S you will find a full account of her life and sad end written with delicate sympathy by

**EDGAR SALTUS**

The same number will contain a complete novelette by Kate L. McLaurin, the third big installment of MARIE VAN VORST'S BIG NOVEL, many unusual short stories by such authors as

**Bonnie R. Ginger**

**William Slavens McNutt**

**Neith Boyce**

**Ethel Train**

**Alicia Ramsey**

and another of Albert Payson Terhune's fascinating Stories of the Super-Women.

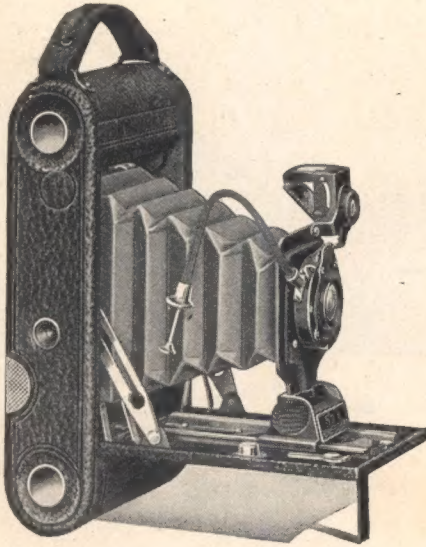
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## AINSLEE'S FOR JULY

On sale everywhere June 12

15 cents the copy





# The New Kodak Jr.

*With all  
the Kodak  
refinements*

**E**ASY to operate, and so thin and compact that it is pocketed without inconvenience. Equipped with new Kodak Ball Bearing shutter with cable release, for time and bulb exposures, and for speeds of  $\frac{1}{25}$  and  $\frac{1}{50}$  with No. 1, and for  $\frac{1}{25}$ ,  $\frac{1}{50}$  and  $\frac{1}{100}$  of a second with No. 1A. New style back, easily removed for quick reloading. Choice of meniscus achromatic or Rapid Rectilinear lens; has automatic focusing lock; collapsible, reversible finder and two tripod sockets.

No. 1, size of pictures, $2\frac{1}{4} \times 3\frac{1}{4}$ inches, meniscus achromatic lens,	\$ 7.50
Ditto, with Rapid Rectilinear lens, - - - - -	9.00
No. 1A, size of pictures, $2\frac{1}{2} \times 4\frac{1}{4}$ inches, meniscus achromatic lens,	9.00
Ditto, with Rapid Rectilinear lens, - - - - -	11.00

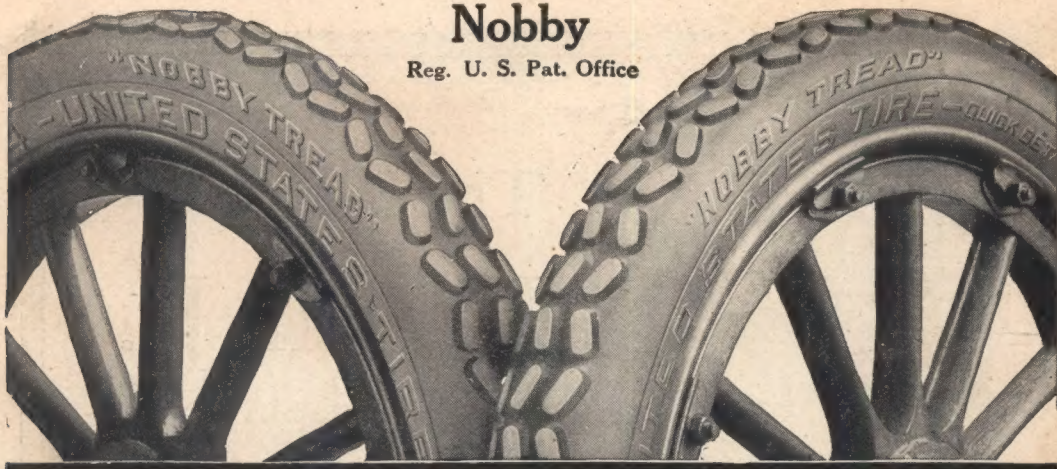
*Catalogue free at your dealer's or by mail.*

**EASTMAN KODAK COMPANY, ROCHESTER, N. Y., *The Kodak City.***



**Nobby**

Reg. U. S. Pat. Office



## Study the "Nobs"

their angles—  
their height—  
their thickness—  
their toughness—  
their resiliency—

and their self-evident reasons why you'll find

## Punctures 90% Less

with "Nobbies" than the average tires. The "Nobs" speak for themselves.

You don't need to be a tire expert to understand why "Nobby Tread" Tires are the largest selling high-grade anti-skid tires in the world.

The "Nobs" explain it—together with the extra strong tire underneath and the superb quality and construction throughout.

These are the reasons for the history-making mileage records of "Nobby Tread" Tires, based on which

## "Nobby Tread" Tires

are now sold under our regular warranty—perfect workmanship and material—  
BUT any adjustments are on a basis of

## 5,000 Miles

Thousands upon thousands of veteran motorists now use "Nobby Tread" Tires on their front and rear wheels through all seasons, because they are such phenomenal mileage tires and real anti-skid tires.



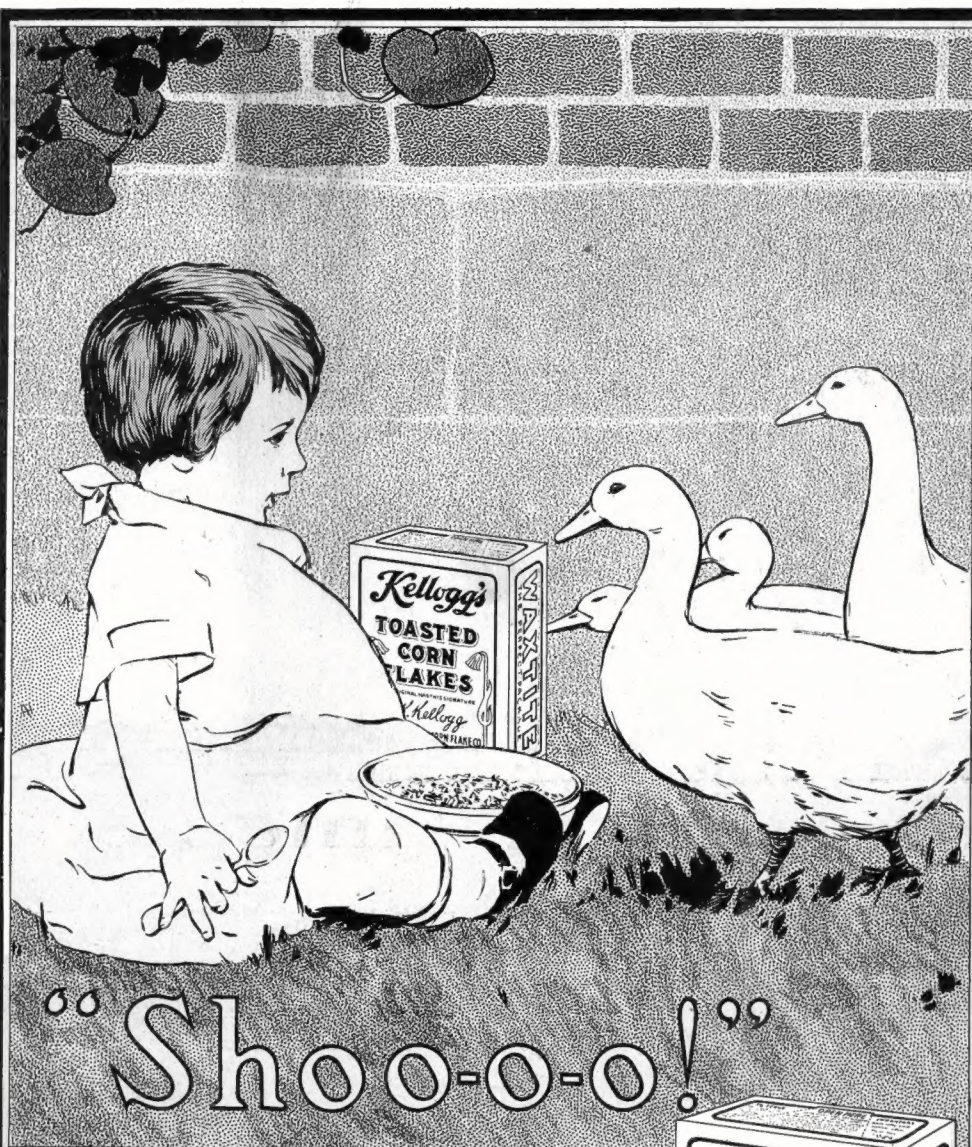
### United States Tire Company

DO NOT BE TALKED INTO A SUBSTITUTE—Your own dealer or any reliable dealer can supply you with "Nobby Tread" Tires. If he has no stock on hand, insist that he get them for you at once—or go to another dealer.

NOTE THIS:—Dealers who sell UNITED STATES TIRES sell the best of everything.

Please mention this magazine when answering advertisements.





THE new WAXTITE package seals in Kellogg crispness, freshness and flavor so that these famous flakes reach you in prime condition. No damp or dust can break through the sealed Waxtite wrapper—a new and strong reason for saying “KELLOGG’S, please” to your grocer.

This picture won the third prize of \$350 in the recent Kellogg Prize Art Competition. The artist is Miss Olive Rush, of New York.

*W. K. Kellogg*







# The Master Timepiece In the Superb New Cases

Write today for our New Watch Book that illustrates the newest ideas in watch cases—the latest triumphs of the master goldsmiths. You may have your own initials handsomely engraved on the superb gold strata case—guaranteed for 25 years. Notice especially the **Inlay Enamel Monograms, Block and Ribbon Monograms, Diamond Set, Lodge, French Art, Dragon Designs.** Find out about the *masterpiece of watch manufacture—19 jewels—adjusted to the second—adjusted to positions—adjusted to temperatures—adjusted to isochronism.* Open face or hunting cases, ladies' or gentlemen's—12 or 16 sizes—direct at the rock-bottom price.

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The Superb Burlington Watch *now* at the *direct* rock-bottom price—the same price that *even the wholesale jeweler* must pay—and in order to encourage everybody to secure this watch at once, pay this rock-bottom price, either for cash or \$2.50 a month.

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**Burlington  
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